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SPEECHES

ON SOME CURRENT

POLITICAL QUESTIONS.

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SPEECHES

ON SOME CURRENT

POLITICAL QUESTIONS

27377

BY

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PREFACE.

I PROBABLY should not have thought of publishing the present volume had it not happened that in the past session the discussion on the Indian Budget did not commence until so late an hour in the evening as to render it impossible for the debate to be adequately reported. Many friends consequently asked me to publish the speech which I made in that debate. After I had consented to do so, I thought it might not be inappropriate to publish some other speeches which I had made on questions which still await settlement. It may be thought that as the present volume contains three speeches on the Irish University question, that I have not confined it simply to political subjects which still remain unsettled. I have however endeavoured to shew that much remains to be done in reference to University Education in Ireland; and it certainly appeared to me that a short retrospect of the history of the question might not be wanting in interest to those who will have to determine the future of higher educa-

tion in Ireland. All the speeches except the last were made in the House of Commons. My chief reason for publishing the one delivered at an annual meeting of the Brighton constituency is, that it refers to many topics of present interest, and especially to the active agitation now being revived in favour of the repeal of the income-tax. It also contains some remarks on the relations between a member and his constituents in reference to the mode of conducting an election.

For the sake of brevity, when I have had occasion to refer several times to the same member, I have mentioned his name, instead of adopting the House of Commons method of describing him as "my honourable friend the member for such a place."

CAMBRIDGE,
Oct. 1873.

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INDIAN FINANCE.

INDIAN BUDGET[1], AUGUST 6, 1872.

I RISE, I need scarcely say, with some little perturbation. Mr Grant Duff is a prophet. He says that nothing I can possibly say on the present occasion will be of the slightest consequence or importance. But, Mr Speaker, as I believe I am responsible for keeping you in the chair, I think it is alike due to you and to the House, that I should at the outset say a few words in justification of the course which I am about to pursue; perhaps,

[1] On the introduction of the Indian Budget, 1872, Mr Fawcett moved the following resolution as an amendment to the motion made by Mr Grant Duff, that the Speaker leave the chair, in order that the House may consider the Indian Financial statement: "That this House, considering the statement of the late Lord Mayo that 'a feeling of discontent and dissatisfaction exists among every class, both European and native, in our Indian Empire, on account of the increase of taxation which has for years been going on,' and that the 'continuance of that feeling is a political danger the magnitude of which can hardly be over-estimated,' is of opinion that the income-tax, which is generally admitted to be unsuited to the people of India, might, during the coming financial year, be dispensed with, and that other taxes exceptionally burdensome to the people of India might be considerably reduced, if the finances of that country were administered with adequate care and economy."

it is the more desirable that I should do so, because I fear it will be necessary for me to trespass somewhat on the time of the House. I gave notice of this resolution in order to do what I could, as an independent member, to prevent the discussion upon the Indian Budget from becoming a perfect farce. If I required any justification for the course of conduct I have pursued, should I not find it in the lateness of the period at which the Indian Budget is brought forward this Session? No one who has the smallest acquaintance with the feelings of the people of India can doubt that the shelving of the Indian Budget to the fag end of the Session, will be interpreted by them as a determination, on the part of the Government, to treat their affairs with neglect. The Prime Minister was pressed, the other night, to give a somewhat earlier day for the consideration of the Indian Budget—and what did he say? He told the House that it must be taken after all the essential business of the Session had been disposed of.

Mr GLADSTONE: I beg your pardon. That was not my expression. What I said was business essential to the winding-up of the Session, having reference to the Bills which were to be passed and the Appropriation Act.

Mr FAWCETT: I gladly accept the explanation of the Prime Minister, because I shall be able to shew, if there is any truth in the statements I am about to make, that there are questions connected with Indian Finance which are not only essential to the winding-up of the business of the House, but that there are considerations associated with them which are

essential to the welfare of the Empire. I know very well what will be the excuse of the Government. They will put forward the ordinary plea of want of time. Want of time! If this is to be their excuse, they must be reminded of the evenings they frittered away on the Parks Bill, a measure which, according to their own confession, left the question more complicated than it was before. Want of time! If this is to be their plea, I will ask the House to remember that more consideration was given, when the Ballot Bill was in committee, to a series of contradictory proposals about illiterate voters than is allotted to the affairs of India in an entire Session. If it is urged that an earlier day could not be found for the Indian Budget, the country must be told that the Government found, not a morning sitting on the 6th August, but a whole evening at the beginning of July, when they wanted to obtain money for Ex-Governor Eyre. With some confidence I say that I shall be able to bring forward facts which will shew that the finances of India are in such a condition, and that our position in that country is so intimately bound up with finance, that unless the House of Commons is prepared to ignore all responsibility in the Government of India, we had better allow any question to be regarded as one of secondary importance, rather than permit her affairs to be treated with neglect. But it will, perhaps, be said, Why did you not bring forward this motion earlier? If I had known what the Government was going to do I would have done so. It will probably be objected that the course I am now pursuing is unusual; but the Government has adopted

an unusual proceeding in fixing the Indian Budget when it cannot be properly discussed, and an unusual proceeding on the part of the Government requires to be met with an unusual course of conduct on the part of private members. But the great point which the Under Secretary has urged against me is that I am a member of the Indian Finance Committee, and that this Committee has reported its evidence without any expression of opinion. This I fully admit[1]; but the evidence taken by the Committee is before this House. It will be criticised and commented upon by the press and by the public, and is silence to be enforced upon those alone who happen to be members of the Committee? If this is to be the case, I can only say that certain financial questions in India so urgently demand immediate consideration, and that the slightest delay will be fraught with so much peril, that I should consider it to be my duty not to continue a member of the Committee one hour longer if silence is to be enforced. Considering the present position of

[1] It must be remembered that the chief reason why the Committee has not been able to complete its labours is, that the officials of the Indian Government have not been able to furnish the accounts which the Committee require in reference to military expenditure and local taxation in India. The *Times* of August 7th, in a leading article on the debate on the Indian Budget, referring to the fact that the Committee had decided simply to report the evidence without expressing an opinion on it, says:—"Mr Grant Duff quoted this conclusion with great complacency at the close of his speech, as a refutation in advance of what Mr Fawcett was about to say, and as a justification of what he had himself said; but those who have followed in any degree the proceedings of the Select Committee know that the judgment was a severe reflection on the ignorance of India at the India Office. The Committee declared that no just opinion could be formed on Indian Finance, because necessary explanation on many obscure points could not be furnished by the India Office, and had not been obtained from India, though in some cases twelve months had elapsed since information had been applied for."

home politics, it is more than probable that the Committee will not finish its labours while this Parliament lasts. It is just possible that some of us may not find our way back to this House; and for one I am anxious that what I have to say on India should be first said in Parliament rather than on the platform. The evidence which is already before the House, and various official documents, contain certain facts with regard to Indian Finance. It cannot be inappropriate to comment on these facts: it will be the duty of the Committee, when their inquiry is completed, to decide who is responsible for certain things which have been done, and to apportion personal blame, if blame is due. I shall carefully abstain from doing this. I shall enter into no personal questions. My sole object is to direct the attention of Parliament to the present financial condition of India, and to ask the House to express its opinion upon the continuance of a financial policy which the highest authorities say has already produced great mischief, and is fraught with the most serious peril in the future. The Under Secretary more than once stated that figures provide an infallible test. His speech, however, affords abundant evidence that there is no more fruitful source of fallacy and error than figures. What, for instance, has he said? He quotes the revenue and expenditure since 1861, and, having shewn that the expenditure during that period exceeds the revenue by £7,500,000, he then tries to persuade the House that, by this outlay of £7,500,000, India has obtained the advantage of £37,500,000 expended on public works. Was there ever a more extraordinary or glaring fallacy? Why, if such a conclusion

were to be accepted, he has done something more than discover the philosopher's stone; he has created wealth out of nothing. It must, of course, be obvious to every one that these public works have not simply been constructed by this £7,500,000 of excess of expenditure over revenue. The remaining £30,000,000 have, of course, been provided by that increase of taxation which we know has taken place in India during the last eleven years, and which, upon the authority of the late Lord Mayo, has produced a feeling of discontent among all classes, both European and native. The Under Secretary seems to think that I have no right to quote Lord Mayo, because the opinion to which I refer was expressed by him in the autumn of 1870, when the income-tax was higher than it is now. It must, however, be remembered that Lord Mayo was not referring to the income-tax only, but to a general increase of taxation; and, before I have concluded, I shall shew that he could not see less reason for alarm now than he did in 1870, when it is remembered with how many new local imposts the people of India are being constantly either burdened or threatened. But, leaving for the present the speech of the Under Secretary, I will proceed, as clearly and succinctly as I can, to give the House an account of the present financial condition of India. The most important and the most characteristic circumstance with regard to the finances of India is that her revenue is, to a great extent, inelastic, and that nearly the whole of her expenditure is elastic in a high degree—or, in other words, that the greater portion of the revenue is fixed in pecuniary amount; whereas two

powerful causes, viz. a general increase in the expenses of administration, and a general rise in prices, partly owing to the depreciation in the value of the precious metals, are constantly causing the pecuniary amount of her expenditure to increase. As this circumstance is one of cardinal importance with regard to the financial prospects of India, I will explain it in greater detail. The most important item in the revenue of India is admitted to be that which is yielded by the land. Its gross amount is about £21,000,000; its net amount, £18,000,000. At least one-fifth of this revenue—namely, that yielded by the permanently settled districts — is fixed for ever in pecuniary amount. Throughout the greater part of the rest of India, except Madras, the land is settled for thirty years—or, in other words, let at a fixed rent for this period. All the land which is thus settled is manifestly only capable of a small increase of rent, which will arise as the estates gradually drop in and have to be resettled. The number of estates which will thus fall in will be comparatively small during the next few years. A high authority, Sir George Campbell, the present Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, has said, that the addition to the revenue which may thus accrue will be nearly counterbalanced by a reduction in revenue which will take place in Madras when it is resettled, for the land there is let direct to the ryots, and it is supposed that their assessment is too high. It is therefore obvious that the land revenue is for a considerable period inelastic, and will not increase as prices advance. The next important item of revenue is salt, which yields £6,000,000. Every

competent authority says the duty cannot be increased. Of course, if the population increases, more salt may be consumed; but at the present time the duty is the highest that has ever been imposed upon a prime necessity of life. The duty varies between 500 and 2,500 per cent. upon the cost of the article. The revenue from opium varies between £6,000,000 and £8,000,000. The Government virtually trades in this article, and obtains the highest price for it, just in the same way as any merchant does for the goods he has to sell. Anyone who has read the evidence of Sir Rutherford Alcock, our late Minister in China, must come to the conclusion that no revenue can be more precarious, that it is far more likely to decrease than increase, and that it may not improbably almost entirely vanish. Although it is my object now to consider our trading in opium, not as a moral, but purely as a financial question, yet certain opinions which I am about to quote from Sir R. Alcock, should, I think, warn us that it is just possible that some people, looking upon our proceedings from a distance, may accuse us of a slight amount of hypocrisy; we do all in our power to force a deleterious drug upon the Chinese; in our anxiety to obtain profit from opium we incur a constant risk of breaking off friendly relations with the Government of China; and at the very time we are doing all this, we make beautiful moral speeches and take infinite credit to ourselves for restricting the sale of intoxicating liquors among our own people. Sir R. Alcock sums up his general experience thus: That a strong adverse feeling exists in China in consequence of our growth of opium. He

says its growth in China is largely and rapidly increasing. The Chinese seriously contemplate prohibiting the importation of the drug, and allowing it to be grown in their own country. They think, having once stopped the importation, they will afterwards be able to stop its growth. One thing seems certain: that if we import into China without restriction, she will grow without restriction. The Chinese tax the growth of opium at the present time, partly by a licence-tax, or permission to grow. The tax is nearly 100 per cent. If they reduced this tax they would, of course, greatly encourage domestic growth. He says if he could have made any concessions about restricting the importation of opium he might have got almost what terms he liked in the treaty he negociated so far as admitting English commodities. It is scarcely necessary to say anything more to prove that, so far from any confidence being placed in opium to meet a future increase in expenditure, a prudent financier would regard it as one of the most uncertain of all revenues. India obtains about £2,250,000 from excise on spirits and drugs, and £2,750,000 from Customs. Little addition can be obtained from either of these sources of revenue. The articles subject to excise are only consumed by a limited class, and if Customs duties were considerably increased, foreign importations would be so much checked that little additional revenue would be yielded. About £750,000 is yielded by stamps. These duties have lately been considerably raised, and cannot be further increased. About £750,000 is also yielded by tributes. These are, of course, fixed in pecuniary amount. Having now mentioned the net value of

all the important items of revenue[1], I am sure it must be obvious to the House that the revenue is eminently inelastic, and that by far the larger portion of it will not increase with the general rise in prices. It cannot be too carefully borne in mind that the English revenue is elastic in an eminent degree, because many articles we can tax are of universal consumption, such as tea, sugar, and beer; whereas the great mass of the Indian people are so poor that it is almost impossible, except by the salt duty, to levy any tax on an article of general consumption. Remembering this inelasticity of Indian revenue, we will now turn to expenditure, and when we find that this is as much characterised by elasticity as the revenue is by its inelasticity, we shall at once obtain a clue to many of the financial difficulties which press so heavily on India, and we shall be able at once to understand the increasing difficulty of making both ends meet in that country. It is scarcely necessary to say that the Army is the great item of expenditure. India, with a much smaller revenue than we have, has an Army

[1] The items of revenue which have here been given would make the revenue appear much smaller than it is usually represented to be. When, however, it is stated that the revenue during the past year exceeds £50,000,000, it must be remembered that this revenue is made up to this figure by including many items which represent no revenue at all. In the statement of the accounts, all the sums which are expended in any department are included in expenditure, and the receipts are included in revenue. It often happens that the expenditure exceeds the revenue. Thus, there appears to be considerable revenue from telegraphs, but as the expenditure on telegraphs greatly exceeds the receipts, confusion only is created by including such an item in a statement of revenue. In other departments, such, for instance, as the forests, although there has been a large nominal increase of revenue during the last few years, the expenditure has grown still faster than the revenue, and thus the revenue from this source, although it has apparently increased, has really diminished.

which is more costly than ours. Its nominal expense is about £16,000,000, but when many charges are added which really belong to the Army, such as ecclesiastical and medical establishments, interest of money spent on barracks and upon railways, which are made for strategical rather than for commercial purposes, the cost of the Army is little short of £18,000,000. The Army, therefore, absorbs nearly the whole net revenue yielded by the land. The serious reflections which are suggested by such a fact as this should be taken to heart by our statesmen. But the point on which I wish to insist is this—that the cost of the Army in proportion to the number of men under arms has increased, and is likely to increase in future. There are two very obvious reasons for this; first, war equipments are becoming more elaborate, complicated, and costly; 2dly, the general rise in prices, which is likely to continue for a long time, must affect almost every item of Army expenditure. This statement can, however, at once be corroborated by specific facts. Between 1863 and 1870 the Indian Army was reduced by 13,000 Europeans and 4,000 natives, i. e. about 20 per cent. of Europeans; and expenditure has increased from £14,800,000 to £16,000,000. But this elasticity of expenditure in India is still more strikingly shewn when we examine the various items of civil administration. Mr Harrison, the Comptroller of Accounts at Calcutta, was examined for several days on these, and at last we found that it was a repetition of a twice-told tale. Certain items of expenditure in 1856—so many thousand pounds; in 1871—the same items increased by 70 or 80 per cent. If the charge be one connected with the Pre-

sidency of Bombay, the increase would usually be yet greater. The following may serve as examples :—

Cost of Printing in 1856	£90,500
„ „ 1870	233,000
Bombay Establishment, 1856	208,000
„ „ 1870	365,000
Household Charges of Governor of Bombay, 1856	7,000
„ „ „ 1870	21,000
Secretariat of Public Works Department, 1856	14,000
„ „ „ 1871	31,000
Medical Charges, 1856	157,000
„ „ 1870	523,000

And similar instances might be indefinitely repeated. But in order completely to corroborate all that I have stated with regard to the inelasticity of the revenue, and the elasticity of the expenditure, I will direct the particular attention of the House to some most significant words of the late Indian Finance Minister. Mr Massey insisted on the necessity of a rigid economy because of the inexpansiveness of the revenue. He said: "The truth is that your resources are so limited that if you should outrun the constable a little, you are at once landed in a deficit. You cannot expand any of your taxation; you cannot create new taxation, with the exception of the income-tax. I wish to say that in round terms there is no new source of taxation, so far as I am aware, that it is possible for you to invent." If we look into the causes that have produced this general rise of prices, which has done so much prejudicially to affect the balance of revenue and expenditure in the past, we shall be able to obtain important evidence as to the probability of a continuance of this rise in prices, and whether it is likely to produce similar consequences in the future. It is impossible to deny

the remarkable rise in prices that has taken place in the last twenty years. Sir Bartle Frere, Sir Robert Montgomery, Mr Harrison, and others, admit that it amounts to 40 or 50 per cent., and they also acknowledge that it must necessarily increase the expenses of government. Any one who examines into the statistics of Indian trade will at once discover the cause to which the rise is chiefly due. During the last eleven years the exports from India have amounted to £541,000,000, and the imports to only £311,000,000, leaving the enormous balance of £230,000,000 due to the country. This has been partly liquidated by an excess of import of treasure over export amounting to £172,500,000; the remaining 60,000,000 may probably be taken as some measure of the sum which India has to pay England for the expenses of the Home Government, for pensions, salaries, and other sources of income to residents in England drawn from Indian revenues. Of the £172,500,000 of specie which has been poured into India during the last eleven years, a considerable proportion has of course been added to her circulation. This has naturally produced a rise in prices, and a similar effect has followed the increase of the paper currency consequent on its being made a legal tender. From the peculiar nature of Indian trade it seems almost certain that this importation of specie will continue. This rise in prices will be assisted by the general rise in prices that is taking place throughout the world, which is due to a depreciation in the value of the precious metals, a fact now admitted by almost every financier and economist of eminence. But assuming this rise of prices, we are at once met with this

most significant fact, that even if the scale on which expenditure is carried on be the same as at present, we must be prepared for increasing difficulty in making both ends meet; because, as has been shewn, expenditure in India is far more affected by a rise in prices than its revenue; or, in other words, it cannot be disputed, as the figures quoted sufficiently shew, that an increase of prices exerts a much smaller influence in augmenting the various items of which revenue is composed than it does in increasing the various items which compose expenditure. During the last eleven years there have been repeated deficits. In other years there has been the greatest difficulty in making both ends meet; when there has been a surplus, this surplus —and it is a point to which I shall most earnestly direct the attention of the House—has sometimes been obtained by devoting capital to income, and is therefore purely fictitious. Alarming as is this financial retrospect, these deficits have taken place in spite of a constant increase of taxation, with all the discontent which we are so authoritatively told has resulted. But if increase of taxation has already produced so much mischief, what is the outlook for the future? A slowly increasing revenue, a rapidly increasing expenditure, administration each year becoming more costly, a determination to embark on a vast and indefinite expenditure on public works, with the ominous fact constantly staring us in the face that, to use Mr Massey's words, "we have used up every source of revenue, and forced up every tax to a maximum." Unless we are prepared to enter upon a course of wanton recklessness, which will lead to financial ruin,

should not the considerations which have been just mentioned arouse the attention and excite the misgivings of every one who feels the slightest concern for the future of our great dependency? But it may be said, "You have attributed a considerable portion of the difficulty of making both ends meet in India to an increase in the costliness of administration and to a general rise in prices. These are natural causes, which are beyond the control of Government, and for them the Government is neither responsible nor deserves censure." My object is not, as I have said, to apportion censure; I have a far more practical object in view, and that is to point out, and, if possible, to avert, the ominous danger which threatens us in the future. If our difficulties in the past, and impending difficulties in the future, are due, to a great extent, to natural causes which are beyond our control, it only makes our financial condition the more alarming. So far as deficits in the past and coming deficits in the future are due to waste, mismanagement and extravagance, this waste, mismanagement and extravagance are within our power to control; and therefore to this extent the danger may be averted. So far, however, as the growth of expenditure beyond revenue is due to those natural causes on which I have commented, it is obvious that there is only one way of meeting the difficulty, and that is to insist on rigid economy, to lessen our outlay, and so forbid the incurring of future liabilities. But in order to bring our exact position more clearly home to the House, let me again repeat that there has been a constant increase of taxation. Let me ask the House to bear in mind the memorable

words of Lord Mayo, which describe the political danger of this augmented taxation; let me also ask you to keep steadily in view this fact—that we have used up all sources of taxation, and that we have been constantly borrowing, which means increased taxation in the future. Between England and India there is this fundamental distinction, and it is one which cannot be too carefully borne in mind. Increase of taxation is sufficiently serious in our own country. Any Government that has to propose it, as was shewn last year, finds it difficult to resist the unpopularity which is excited. But if increase of taxation is serious in England, it is a hundred times more serious in India. If some exceptional emergency should arise in our own country which would require five, ten, or fifteen additional millions to be raised, we all know that the money could be obtained. The duty on some articles of general consumption, such as tea, sugar, and beer, could be increased. The income-tax might be raised to a shilling in the pound. But in India there is no article of general consumption from which increased revenue could be obtained. The income-tax, as I will presently shew, has been almost universally condemned as an impost entirely unsuited to India, and therefore I venture to assert—and it is an opinion formed after the most careful inquiry, and confirmed by the highest financial authorities—that it would be impossible to raise five millions of additional taxation in India without creating evil and producing an amount of discontent which might make the boldest tremble for the tranquillity of the country. But then we are brought face to face with this startling fact, that unless our present

scale of expenditure is curtailed, and unless the Government is forbidden to incur future liabilities—they have already proposed to spend £28,000,000 on State Railways and £39,000,000 on Irrigation Works—something far more than £5,000,000 additional revenue will soon be required; and from what source is the money to be obtained? Let me entreat the House to remember that a simple statement of income and expenditure during the last few years will utterly fail to give any true idea of our financial position. Our difficulties have been so pressing, such desperate efforts have been made to lessen the deficit and create a surplus, that, like embarrassed traders, the Government of India have been using up their capital, they have been appropriating to income what ought to have been devoted to reduce debt, they have been using funds which ought to have been kept to meet ulterior charges; in fact, in a single sentence, they have been performing that financial operation which is known as discounting the future. In the accounts of 1869-70 there is stated as an item of income a miscellaneous land receipt of £427,000. After a good deal of cross-examination, it was found that this sum represents the accumulations arising from the sale of waste lands. The land is virtually the property of the Government, and therefore at the very time that they are pursuing a policy of borrowing, they sell property, and use the proceeds as income. If it is urged that there is a precedent for this, there is certainly no precedent for taking the accumulations. But there are other instances of a still more striking kind. The capital of the following pension funds, namely, the Civil Service of £830,000,

Bengal Military of £470,000, Military and Orphan £480,000, and others, have been, or are in the process of being appropriated to income. The Comptroller of Finances admits amongst the miscellaneous receipts of 1869-70 an item of £240,000, which is a part of the capital which has thus been appropriated. Therefore this sum, instead of being in any true sense of the word income, is simply a measure of the prodigality with which the Government is spending its capital. Let me single out one instance of like conduct, which, though the sum in question be small, is most significant. £115,000 of borrowed money was expended by the Indian Government in the Alexandria and Malta Telegraph. The telegraph turning out a failure, was afterwards sold at a great discount, and the proceeds of the sale were appropriated as legitimate income. Mr Seccombe, the Secretary of the Financial Department of the India Office, questioned on this transaction, confessed that such was the method of carrying on financial transactions adopted by the Indian Government, that if a million were borrowed for the construction of some public work, and if it were afterwards sold for £750,000, the latter sum would be appropriated to income, and might be used to secure an apparent surplus. One more instance might be mentioned. The annual tributes which have to be paid to us by some Native Princes have been capitalised, and the capital has been devoted to income. After such revelations and such admissions, I can scarcely be called an alarmist if I assert that the accuracy of the accounts is vitiated. The Comptroller of the Finances at Calcutta admitted that if there had not

been this appropriation of capital to income, the surplus of £118,000 announced in the year 1869-70 would would have been described as a deficit of more than half a million. The Financial Secretary at the India Office, referring to the fact that the Indian Government has a debt account, but no capital account, admits that no merchants would think of carrying on their business in this way. My mercantile friends in this House need not be reminded of what would be the result if they did. They would quickly find themselves in the Insolvent Court. In the annals of railway mismanagement we have had striking examples of the results of the policy of applying capital to income. There may be a few years of meretricious prosperity, shares may be at a premium, large dividends may be paid, but the day of reckoning comes. A defence has been set up for the transactions just described on the ground that all governments are doing the like; but, in the first place, it must be remembered that almost all Governments are spending more than they have, and are rapidly accumulating a load of indebtedness whence must spring trouble and difficulty in the future. And further, in reply to the assertion that India is only following in the steps of our own Government, there is this essential distinction between the two countries. India, unlike England, does not simply discharge the ordinary functions of Government, but carries out various industrial undertakings. In the construction of railways, irrigation, and other works, India does what in our own country would be done by private traders or companies. She, therefore, ought to be bound by considerations which, if disregarded, would

bring disaster on mercantile undertakings. If a merchant or a company were constantly borrowing they would know that it was prudent—I might use a far stronger expression—not to devote capital to income. If England is quoted to justify what has been done in India, I would say that perfect openness has always been the principle of our Budget, while it has required the most laborious research to disentomb the facts I have quoted from the darkness in which they were buried; and humility compels me to say that the search has been so incomplete that far greater discoveries may be in store for other and more skilled explorers. If, then, the deficits during the last few years would have been more serious, and the few surpluses would have been diminished, or would have vanished altogether but for this misapplication of capital, it becomes more apparent than ever that unless there is a considerable reduction in expenditure the increase in taxation must be continuous and rapid. I have already referred to some of the financial considerations associated with increase of taxation, and I will ask the House to consider the subject in another light. One striking peculiarity of Indian finance, as was lately pointed out in one of a series of most able articles that have appeared in the *Times* on Indian affairs, is that she has no financial reserve. "At the present moment she is in the position of spending every shilling at her command, and with every probability of having to spend a great deal more. Even in times of peace her resources are strained to make both ends meet." And when we find that this strain is so great that a mere question of £500,000 involves the continuance of the income-tax,

and when we further proceed to consider the extraordinary consensus of the highest financial authorities, condemning this tax as an impost entirely unsuited to India, and fraught with the gravest financial and political evils, it is almost superfluous to add another word to bring home to every one the critical, nay, even the perilous position, of Indian finance. I have said that the income-tax has been condemned by an extraordinary consensus of opinion. In making this statement I do not forget that the Under Secretary said that for every authority I could produce in opposition to the income-tax, he could at least produce an authority on the other side of equal weight and importance. If he has all these high authorities ready at his command, I must say he has made a very unlucky selection and has done very scant justice to his case. Who is it most natural to quote on such a subject as this? Why of course it is those gentlemen who have held high financial positions in India, and those who have been practically concerned with the collection of the income-tax. Who does the Under Secretary quote? One native newspaper and General Barrow. I have not a word to say against either of these authorities, but I venture to assert that for one paper (whether native or European) in favour of the income-tax at least ten are opposed to it. Although, of course, nothing is further from my intention than to disparage a single word of the praise which was bestowed by the Under Secretary on General Barrow, yet I could not gather that he had ever held any of the highest financial positions in India. On the other side, I shall proceed to quote the opinions of three successive Indian Finance

Ministers, Sir C. Trevelyan, Mr Laing, and Mr Massey. In addition to their testimony, I shall quote the opinions of many high officials who have been practically acquainted with the assessment and levying of the income-tax. The House need not be reminded of Sir C. Trevelyan's action in reference to this tax. Through his opposition to it, India lost for a time the advantage of his eminent services, for he would not incur the responsibility of levying so dangerous an impost. Mr Laing says, in his evidence, that he regarded the income-tax as "about as bad and obnoxious a mode of raising revenue as it is possible to imagine in a country like India." He added: "I think that for an Oriental country, and with the Eastern habit of mind, any tax which imposes inquisition into individual means is attended with innumerable evils, which are little felt in a country like England. The Oriental mind is particularly jealous and timid upon all those questions. The tendency to evasion, and even perjury, is perhaps the greatest evil. In the state of the country you have no means of getting accurately at the incomes of any, except the limited class of fundholders, and European officials, and so on; for all the others, for the mass of the native population, you have no accurate means of getting at them, and you are obliged to employ a large army of native subordinate officers, who, in a case like that, are almost certain to abuse their trust, and for every rupee that comes into the Treasury to extort two rupees out of the population that have to pay it." Mr Massey says the income-tax is fraught with great difficulties and dangers. The natives connect the idea of income-

tax with some prospective plan of confiscation, and they regard with a dread, and horror, and repugnance which I can hardly exaggerate, the creation of a machinery which will enable the Government to levy such a tax. I desire to direct the particular attention of the House to the following most significant words of Mr Massey: "Nothing on earth should induce me to hold office as Finance Minister if the condition imposed upon me by the Secretary of State was the maintenance of an income-tax as an ordinary source of revenue." Sir G. Campbell, the present Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, says:—"The tax, to my surprise, chiefly falls on small cultivators and ryots. Amongst them so strong and bitter a feeling has been aroused that they threaten to migrate to Nepaul, where there is no income-tax." Mr C. H. Campbell, Commissioner of the Presidency Division in Bengal, stated in 1870:—"Since the British connection with India began, no measure has ever been introduced which caused such deep dislike to our rule, to use a mild term, and this, I can safely say, is the opinion of all classes, official as well as non-official, in this division." Mr Inglis, member of the Legislative Council at Calcutta, says:—"It may be true that only one in 300 pays the tax, but it is equally true that out of the 299 remaining, at least one-half are subjected to the most vexatious oppression, inquisition, and extortion, when preliminary lists are being drawn up, and that a very large number of these men have to pay in order to keep their names out of the lists. For one who is legally responsible, twenty are assessed; and," he says, "the tax is producing a demo-

ralising influence throughout the country." Sir W. Muir confirms this opinion, after consulting many of the officials under him. The Hon. W. Robinson, official member of Council, quotes Mr Bruce Norton, Advocate-General of Madras, who says there exists at this moment, "in consequence of this taxation, a sullen feeling of discontent from one end of the Empire to the other." I fear I have already wearied the House with these quotations, or I could shew that the same opinions had been expressed by other most experienced officials who have been practically concerned in the levying of income-tax. But what has been said politically, socially, and financially condemnatory of the income-tax suffices to leave the supporters of the Budget in this dilemma. *If such a tax is necessary in time of peace, our financial position cannot be described as too serious. If, however, the tax is not absolutely necessary, the Government that maintains it cannot be too severely censured.* Dealing, in the first place, with the former of these alternatives, what is the inevitable conclusion to be drawn if the Government persists in saying that the income-tax cannot be dispensed with during the present year? It is the most ample confession of the desperateness of our financial situation. Would such a tax be maintained, in the face of such official remonstrances and warnings as those just quoted, if the fiscal resources of India had not been so entirely exhausted that the Government is at its wits' end to obtain the £500,000 which the tax yields? But this is not all. If this tax is our last desperate resource in time of peace, it must be our chief reliance as expenditure increases.

Who can calmly contemplate such a prospect? I have already referred to Lord Mayo. No Governor-General ever more actively exerted himself to become acquainted with the feelings of the people. No one can accuse him of being either a theorist or an alarmist. He was above all things distinguished for strong common sense, and, as his untimely end proved, he was courageous almost to a fault. And if he has affirmed that "the increase of taxation has created a political danger, the magnitude of which can hardly be overestimated," to what proportion will this danger grow if increased expenditure is to continue, and if all the additional revenue that is needed is to be provided out of the income-tax? But we who think that the income-tax, as an ordinary source of revenue, might be dispensed with, and that expenditure also might be so much reduced as to enable some additional taxes to be considerably lightened, we, I say, who hold these opinions, have not to face the difficulties and dangers which they must be prepared to meet who, like the present Indian Government, assert that the income-tax must be maintained, and who seem bent on increasing future expenditure by embarking on a vast and indefinite outlay on public works, many of which, as I shall shew from the experience of the past, are sure to prove unproductive. But it will be fairly said, those who assert that the income-tax need not have been imposed during the present year, and that other taxes might be reduced by a curtailment of expenditure, are bound to shew how the attainment of this object may be practically realized. Before commenting on specific acts of waste and extravagance, it

may, in the first place, be remarked that the Government of India is so arranged as to reduce the guarantees for economy to an absolute minimum. In the days of the East India Company, India was, to a certain extent, protected by the self-interest of proprietors. At any rate, they would see with jealous watchfulness that India was not unfairly charged for many things which England ought to pay. Under the present system there are four or five distinct persons who can spend. There are the Secretary of State, the Governor-General, the Governor of Bombay, the Governor of Madras, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-west Provinces. There is no individual responsibility, no distinct control. There are also various great spending departments. General Strachey, who probably knows more of what goes on in the Public Works Department than any one else, says, speaking of this Department, "There is no specific personal responsibility." It is sometimes said that all expenditure is ultimately under the control of the Secretary of State, but this, of course, is a mere fiction. Moreover, as can be shewn by reference to one of the highest legal authorities, it is impossible to define the powers of the Secretary of State. Mr Fitzjames Stephen has recently said, "In order to ascertain the powers of the Secretary of State for India, it is constantly necessary to find out what were the powers of the Court of Directors; and, in order to ascertain that, it is necessary to see how far the Charter Acts of 1854, 1834, 1814, 1794, and the Regulating Act of 1773 repealed, or continued, or revived each other's provisions." But, if it is maintained that

the ultimate control in all financial questions is exercised by the Secretary of State, let us ask what is his power and what is his position. He is simply a member of the Cabinet; our Cabinet is the product of party Government, and therefore it comes to this: that India has to put up with all the disadvantages, and enjoys none of the advantages of party Government. It is a truism to assert that party Government does not give an effective administrative machine. Directly a Minister begins to know his work, he may have to retire into Opposition, or party exigencies may require that he should be shifted to some other department, of the business of which he is thoroughly ignorant. During the first three years that I was in Parliament, there were three Secretaries of State for India, and, I think, four Under Secretaries. On the other hand, party Government gives us this advantage, that it brings the pressure of public opinion rapidly to bear upon the Government. But as India has no representative in this House, and little public opinion in her support out of doors, she has to bear the disadvantages of party Government without any of its advantages. The Secretary of State, as I have said, is simply a member of the Cabinet, and what chance is there of the affairs of India receiving adequate consideration when the Cabinet is perplexed by a host of questions which may affect the fate of an administration? India may be neglected, her money may be wasted, her affairs may be mismanaged, it will not affect the interests of party, it will scarcely raise a ripple on the surface of politics. No angry constituents will give trouble or annoyance to a Treasury "Whip." I suppose the hon. member for

Shaftesbury (Mr G. Glyn) would as little expect to be disturbed by the politics of Timbuctoo as he would to have an uneasy moment about the affairs of India. But the assertion that the constitution of the Cabinet is such as to secure no adequate protection for the interests of India can be specifically substantiated. A recent Finance Minister distinctly stated in a letter to the *Times* "that the finances of India were repeatedly sacrificed to the wishes of the Horse Guards and to the exigencies of English estimates." But on this point there is more important, because more precise, testimony from Mr W. T. Thornton, who for years has been one of the leading officials at the India Office. India, as well as our own country, cannot feel too grateful to Mr Thornton for his outspoken courage. He says:— "Judging from experience, I should say there is not the smallest chance of any fair treatment of the interests of India where the interests of England come into opposition to them." And again, referring to a series of transactions, one result of which was that India was obliged to pay two-fifths of the cost of an almost worthless telegraph cable laid down between Alexandria and Malta, he admits that "if you represent the English Government by an individual A, and the Indian Government by an individual B, that A pursued towards B uncommonly sharp practice, and that in ordinary life B would not submit to it if he could help it." Competent authorities have repeatedly stated that the pecuniary arrangements that have been made since the amalgamation of our own army with that of India have inflicted a heavy annual loss upon India—one of not less than a million. General Pears,

Military Secretary at the India Office, says that India has to pay an extravagant price for the recruits that we send her, and states that, if she could obtain her recruits herself, instead of getting them through our Government, she could save 20 per cent. A remonstrance was addressed to the War Office on the subject six months before he gave his evidence, but no notice up to that time had been taken of it. During the Abyssinian war, although India was in no way responsible for or interested in that contest, we drew a large portion of her army from her without giving her any compensation. If it were necessary to repeat examples of burthens being unjustly thrown on India, I might refer to the fact that we compel her to pay the cost of the Persian Mission and a considerable portion of the consulate charges in China. She has nothing whatever to do with the mission to Persia. The minister to Persia is appointed not by her, but by our own Foreign Office in Downing-street; and there is not the slightest reason why she should contribute to our consular charges in China any more than Australia. When the Sultan paid us the compliment of visiting our shores, a somewhat niggard hospitality was relieved by a splendid ball at the India House. By a master stroke of equal injustice and meanness, this was charged to the Indian account. And when a Prince of our own Royal House visited our Indian possessions, the travelling expenses of his companions were defrayed from the same source. I need not comment on these facts, except to say that every gentleman must be ashamed of them. The Government who sanctions them does the English nation the injustice of exhibiting us in the

eyes of educated Hindoos and Mussulmans as if we were mean and grasping. The English people, if they had adequate knowledge of such transactions, would most heartily disapprove of them. They shew that there is no sufficient pressure of public opinion in England adequately to protect the interests of India. Would that were all. On the contrary, pressure has been used in England to extract money from India. Not only have her interests been sacrificed when they clashed with the political interests of parties in England, but also when they clashed with commercial interests. India seems too often to be looked upon as if she had been specially created to increase the profits of English merchants, to afford valuable appointments for English youths, and to give us a bountiful supply of cheap cotton. About twenty years since was commenced the system of guaranteeing 5 per cent. interest on railways and other public works in India. It is impossible to devise any scheme which would more inevitably lead to waste and extravagance, and destroy every security for economy and efficiency. It has lately been reported that in one railway, the Great Indian Peninsular Railway, two thousand bridges, viaducts, and other masonry works will require reconstruction. Five per cent. guaranteed on the revenues of India represents something more than the current rate of interest, and therefore it was of comparatively speaking little consequence how unproductively the money was expended, for those who advanced it are always certain of a remunerative return. Up to the present time about £90,000,000 has been spent on guaranteed railways; the amount of interest which the Government has had to make good

up to the present time has been £33,000,000. The contracts are arranged on conditions most unfavourable to India. Government can at any time be compelled to take over a company, repaying to the shareholders not the actual value of the line, but also all the capital that has been wasted on ill-constructed works. Upon the Calcutta and South-Eastern Railway about £600,000 was expended. On this outlay 5 per cent. was guaranteed. The scheme proving a disastrous failure, the Government took it over at par, and it does not now nearly pay its working expenses. £3,000,000 was expended on the Jubblepore branch of the East India Railway. The usual 5 per cent. was guaranteed, and it only just pays its working expenses. Other still more disastrous instances might be quoted. In the Scinde, Punjaub, and Delhi Railway more than £8,000,000 was expended, upon which 5 per cent. has been guaranteed by the Government. The net annual return at the present time is about £50,000, and the Government annually loses about £400,000 on this disastrous undertaking. The shareholders, however, are perfectly happy. They are certain of their 5 per cent., and the £100 shares are at the present time quoted at £6 premium. But this system of guaranteeing interest has not been confined to railways. £1,000,000 was raised some time since for the Madras Irrigation Works. Of course the expenditure greatly exceeded the estimates. £600,000 more had to be raised, and the works will probably cost at least £2,000,000 before they are completed. As yet no return has been realised, and competent authorities say that the works have been so ill-constructed that no return ever can be realised.

Although not a shilling of profit has been yielded upon the outlay, the Government has been obliged to pay all the time its 5 per cent., and the shares are consequently at a premium. If I were not afraid of wearying the House I could go on hour after hour describing similar disasters. There are one or two other examples that I cannot forbear from mentioning. £1,000,000 was raised by a private company in 10,000 shares of £100 each for the Orissa Irrigation Works. The shares fell to a heavy discount—they were quoted in the London money market at £60, and were unsaleable at that price. The Government bought the Company at par, and, as if it was not enough to make this extravagant bargain, in a moment of inexplicable generosity £50,000 more was given additional to be distributed among the *employés* of the Company. £200,000 has been advanced to the Calcutta Port Fund—this has been written off as a bad debt. £250,000 of public money has been sunk and entirely lost in the Port Canning scheme. It is difficult to form an adequate estimate of the enormous loss which will result to the Government from taking over the Elphinstone Land Scheme. With these, and a hundred other similar facts before us, a child may understand how difficult it is to create a balance between revenue and expenditure in India, and how easy it would be, if the finances of India were managed with adequate care and economy, to dispense with the income-tax, with all its dangers, and to reduce other taxes which press so heavily on the people. But how are we to insure that the finances of India will be managed in the future with greater care and economy? Every effort should

be made to interest the English public in the affairs of India. If we are not mindful of the moral responsibility we have assumed in undertaking the government of 150,000,000 of people, we may perhaps awaken to the enormous stake that we have in the country. £180,000,000 of English capital has been embarked on the security of Indian revenues. In alluding to the vast amount of English capital invested on the security of the revenues of India, I must refer to that part of the speech of the Under Secretary in which he presumes to intimate that certain people, who do not take the same hopeful view of Indian finance that he does, must be bitterly disappointed because the present price of Indian securities is so high. The House, I am sure, will agree with me that such an insinuation is ungenerous and unjust. What right has he to suppose that, in criticising the financial policy of India, we are actuated by any other motives than a desire to prevent the continuance of a line of conduct which we believe to be mischievous and dangerous? The Under Secretary could not be more pleased than I should be to see a real improvement in the financial condition of India produce a rise in the price of Indian securities. There is never any advantage in concealing the truth, and I believe the present high price of Indian securities is in no small part due to the fact that investors believe that England, if anything went wrong with the revenues of India, would be, if not legally, at least morally, responsible for the money that has been advanced on the security of Indian revenues. The sooner there is a clear and distinct understanding on this point the better. It is probable that investors have been

deluded into the belief that England is either directly or indirectly responsible for money advanced to India, partly in consequence of an Act which this House unfortunately passed some years since, which allows trust money to be invested in Indian securities. At any rate it is important that there should be no ambiguity in the matter. If England is not responsible the sooner investors are made to understand this the better. If England is responsible, let India enjoy the advantage of being able to obtain money at the same rate of interest as is represented by our funds. There cannot properly be any middle course. Those who, at the present time, invest in Indian securities obtain a higher rate of interest than those who invest in our funds, and this higher interest they ought not to enjoy if the security is the same as it would be if England is to be held ultimately responsible for the money borrowed by India. The investors in Indian securities are so numerous and so widely scattered that if their interest in India were awakened simply by pecuniary considerations this House would soon reflect the feeling, and a Government would then know that they could no longer remain passive spectators of acts of extravagance and mismanagement like those which have been described. But although we must look to the growth of public opinion as the only permanent cure, yet there are certain things which might at once be done which would go far to alleviate present difficulties. In the first place, this House should express a positive opinion that never again should the Government give guaranteed interest on capital, so that projectors should be insured against the evil consequences

of their own mismanagement. Secondly the military expenditure should be thoroughly looked into. Mr Massey endorses the opinion already expressed, holding it highly probable that a more systematic revision of the estimates would result in the saving of a million annually. Lord Sandhurst, when retiring from his position of Commander-in-Chief in India, said that economy and increased strength would result from merging the two armies of Bombay and Madras, and "that so long as the separate system lasted he was hopeless of real economy." But probably the most essential service that this House can render to India is to express its opinion on the policy which the Government seems determined to pursue of carrying out a great system of public works with borrowed money. As long ago as 1863 Sir C. Trevelyan said, "Has the Government yet to learn that it is beyond their power to furnish a proper industrial outfit for such a country as India? The limits have already been passed when they can exercise an effective control, and, with regard to works carried out directly by the State, there is certain to be careless and wasteful management through an inattention to details." Are such warnings as these to be disregarded? Will the House hesitate, after the loss which public works have already entailed, to express its disapproval of the Government continuing a vast system of borrowing for industrial undertakings? They talk about spending £30,000,000 upon railways. The best lines of country have already been occupied, and the railways entail a heavy annual loss. Who will administer this money? Why, it will be administered by a department that allowed a vast outlay upon

barracks, some of which tumbled down as soon as they were completed, and others were so faulty in construction that they were pronounced useless. Who will watch over the expenditure? Why, a department whose accounts are, by its own confession, in inextricable confusion. From the evidence given by General Strachey, the moving spirit of the department, it may be fairly concluded that the accounts are not kept in such a way as to enable an intelligent person to ascertain whether works called reproductive are really so. You cannot tell whether the money voted for them is actually spent upon them. An attempt has in vain been tried to get the Financial Department to publish a clear account of the loans that were raised and how they were expended. Railways and other public works may be extremely useful in themselves, but if they are conducted on too costly a scale, if there is no effective supervision, if there is that careless and wasteful management, through inattention to details, on which Sir C. Trevelyan comments, the most useful works may become extremely unprofitable. A simile will exactly explain what is being done in India. You visit a friend who is deriving an income of about £30,000 a year from his estates; he has many incumbrances, and he is spending somewhat more than his income—say £32,000 a year. He takes you into his confidence; you go over his estate, and you see at once his rent-roll can be increased. You say, "You require a railway to bring your produce to market, some of your land requires irrigation, you need new roads, and new buildings; carry out these works and your income will soon be £40,000 a year." You return a few years afterwards, and you find that

the £10,000 a year extra has been obtained, but, on looking into the matter somewhat further, your friend says, "It is true I have the extra £10,000 a year, but it has cost £15,000 a year to get it," and he is more embarrassed than ever; but you say, "How has this come to pass? Why have the works been carried out so extravagantly?" The friend says, "How could I help it? I couldn't get the railway made without giving a guarantee, and this encourages extravagance so much that it has cost as much as if the rails had been made of silver instead of iron. Many of my irrigation works have been so ill constructed that they yield an inadequate return; the buildings have been erected of such bad materials that many of them tumbled down, and others were of no use. I have been able to exercise no control over the expenditure. I have had one agent in London, another upon the estate, and three or four under-agents, all of whom have been giving orders; there has been no direct responsibility, and where so many persons have been spending it has been impossible to concentrate responsibility, and the accounts are in inextricable confusion." This at once will be seen to be no exaggerated description, when we know what has taken place in the Public Works Department, and when we know that India has an agent in London, an agent in Calcutta, and local agents in Madras and Bombay, all of whom have been spending her money in what are called industrial improvements. Some of the lavish expenditure is made under excuses less specious even than industrial improvements. When we find an item of £155,000 for a new country-house for the Governor of Bombay, and discover a marked

disinclination on the part of a high official to state who authorized this prodigal expenditure, we are led to long for a greater amount of personal responsibility in the Finance Department, and some security that the expenditure has all come under the notice of some central authority. One fatal error underlies, not only the expenditure in the Public Works Department, but the whole of our government in India. Our government is far too expensive for so poor a country. Nothing has been a more fruitful source of serious evils than the opinion that is so prevalent in England that India is an extremely rich country. We have been misled by a certain kind of barbaric splendour which is displayed by native Princes who visit this country; and by remembrance of the booty that has, in the time of war, been found in some native palace. It is, however, almost impossible to overstate the great poverty of the mass of the people. Their ordinary wages are often not more than 3*d.* or 4*d.* a day. The rent of land paid to the Government is often not more than 4*s.* per acre. We must bear these facts in mind in order justly to appreciate the monstrous folly and extravagance of constructing railways on as costly a scale as if they were to connect such centres of wealth and population as those existing in our own country; whereas they pass through districts where the people, only earning 3*d.* a day, are too poor to travel, and where there are no mines and no manufactures. It is only necessary to remember that at the present time there is no financial reserve in India to shew the peril, nay, the folly, of undertaking public works some of which are certain to be unproductive. In asking the

House to disapprove of carrying out public works, either by guaranteeing interest or by raising loans, it is not difficult to anticipate the argument which will be used on the other side. It will be said, that if the State refuses either to assist or to carry out public works in India on its own account they will never be constructed by private enterprise. In the first place, it may be replied that as long as it is known that a certain amount of pressure will obtain a guarantee, or will secure the expenditure of State money, there is no chance that anything will be done by private enterprise. It is just as certain that such State intervention will destroy private enterprise as it is that a tender exotic will be killed by a chilling frost. When it is remembered that British capital is freely invested in every quarter of the world, that vast sums are lent to embarrassed and unstable Governments, that millions are readily embarked in such hazardous speculations as Mexican and South American mines, how can it be maintained, without casting the severest reproach upon our government of India, that India, governed and protected by us, is the only country which the English capitalist will avoid? When deputations from the City or from Chambers of Commerce wait upon the Secretary of State urging him to grant a guarantee, or pressing him to spend the revenues of India in throwing open, for instance, the Godavery, in order to cheapen the carriage of cotton, would he not be acting with prudence and wisdom if he said, "The resources of India have already been so severely strained, our means of obtaining increased revenue have been so exhausted, that I cannot incur the peril

of sanctioning fresh liabilities. If, gentlemen, you think that the works you ask the Government to construct are likely to prove profitable, I shall be delighted to afford you every facility for embarking your money, and I shall rejoice, both for your sake and for the sake of India, in aiding you to find an eligible investment for a portion of that accumulated wealth for which, in every quarter of the world but India, you are so anxious to find a profitable employment." If Secretaries of State had adopted such a policy in the past, or were prepared to adopt it in the future, the finances of India would now be in a very different position, and many threatening difficulties and dangers would be averted. Above all things, India for the next few years requires rest, and nothing would be so likely to secure her this as a firm resolve that there should be no more guarantees, and that, for the present at least, no public works should be constructed except from any surplus that might be saved out of ordinary revenue. But I must, if the House will kindly bear with me for a short time longer, say a few words on a scheme which has been lately brought into operation, which is calculated to conceal from us in this country an increase of taxation which will be imposed on the people under the form of an augmentation of local burdens. The decentralisation scheme to which I refer will transfer several charges which have hitherto been Imperial to the Provincial Governments. A fixed sum is, in the first instance, to be voted from Imperial Funds for these charges, but the sum is at the outset confessedly inadequate to meet them; the charges are certain to increase, and therefore the deficiency will have to be

met by a constant augmentation in provincial taxation. We are beginning to recognise the fact that the growth of local taxation in our own country is one of the most serious questions which can engage our attention. Local taxation will soon become in India of far greater moment than it is even in our own country. The growth of local taxation in India is less visible than Imperial taxation, and therefore is a more insidious evil. We have all heard of the agitation against the income-tax in India; but few members of this House are aware of the fact that there is a much more onerous income-tax in Bombay for local purposes. The Imperial income-tax is only 1 per cent., and does not reach incomes of less than £100; the local income-tax in Bombay reaches incomes of £5. Scarcely a month passes without the people being worried and alarmed either by the actual imposition or by the threat to impose some new local burden upon them. At one time it is a Road cess; at another time it is an Education cess. Quite recently an Act was passed by the Government of India—I believe it has not received the sanction of the Secretary of State—which declared that if the Punjaub irrigation canals did not yield a profit of 7 per cent., the people who live near the canals should pay the irrigation rate even if they made no use of the water. It has been stated that it was intended to extend the provisions of the Act to the rest of India. Is it any wonder that the people are irritated, perplexed, or alarmed? It has been argued in justification of such a policy that the people who refuse to use the water do not know their own interests, and they ought to be compelled to do that which

is good for them. This is paternal government with a vengeance! Why, of course, it will soon be proposed that if the State Railways do not pay 7 per cent., the people who don't use the railways shall be made to pay because they don't know what is good for them; they ought to travel by railway, and they ought not to use any cheaper mode of transporting their merchandise. The Punjaub Canal Act, to which I have referred, contains a still more objectionable provision, for it declares that if enough voluntary labour was not forthcoming for the construction of canals, they should be made by forced labour. No wonder that the people are not enamoured of industrial works when they find themselves threatened with serfdom and with forced contributions. If our own Government were to bring forward any such unfortunate proposal, we know what would be the result. They would immediately have to succumb to the pressure of public opinion. But the people of India can bring no pressure of public opinion to bear upon their Government; they, it is true, in the last resource, look to this House for a redress of their wrongs, but their complaints have here found but a faint and feeble echo. One of the wisest of Indian statesmen, Sir D. Macleod, has warned us against the danger of imposing any new tax without first consulting the natives. New taxes are constantly being imposed, and the problem of how we are to consult the natives remains unsolved[1]. In conclusion, I wish only to say,

[1] The fact that India has not representative institutions and that England has is a sufficient explanation of the fact that decentralisation may be a very good thing in the latter country and an equally bad thing in the former. The local representative institutions in England provide a security that the money devoted to local purposes will be more economi-

as it is with individuals, so it is with Governments; when there is waste and extravagance in large matters, there is certain to be petty and irritating economy in small details. Royal entertainments can be given in this country at the expense of the Indian people; whilst princely palaces can be built for local governors; and millions can be squandered in ill-constructed barracks; gigantic schemes, which won't pay their working expenses, can be sanctioned. All this can be done, till

cally expended if it is obtained from local instead of from Imperial funds. People think that if money is spent in their own locality and is provided from the national exchequer, only a very small portion of it is really contributed by them. In India, however, it is not the people, but those who govern them, who determine what money shall be spent for local purposes, and from what taxes it shall be provided. The people, therefore, have no voice in checking or controlling the expenditure; and, as a local tax will attract much less attention than an Imperial tax, local burdens may increase in India without attracting half so much attention, either in that country or in England, as if there had been a similar increase in Imperial taxation. It must moreover be recollected that the Government of India is really less under the influence of public opinion than it was formerly. During the last few years the practice has grown up of the Governor-General and his Council migrating to Simla for a great part of each year. What would be thought if the English Parliament spent a considerable portion of its time far away in the wilds of Sutherlandshire? This migration to Simla wastes a great deal of time, and involves an annual expenditure of £56,000. But this is a small part of the evil. The only faint semblance of representation which exists in India is that a certain number of non-official members are nominated to the Council of the Governor-General. Some of these non-official members are European merchants; others are natives. The merchants have not the time to go to Simla, and the natives usually will not go. Consequently the migration to Simla to a great extent destroys the only slight element of representation that there is in the Government of India. No one would, of course, object to a Governor-General having necessary rest and relaxation, but the disadvantage of the system, which has only grown up within the last few years, is that the Council and other officials are taken away from the seat of Government. Much valuable information is contained on this and other points in the evidence recently given before the Finance Committee by Mr Dacosta. His testimony is the more important because he has resided nearly thirty years in India, and is one of the few non-official witnesses that have been examined.

the Government, waking up as it were from a dream, looks round and says:—"We must be economical; we will, as a compensation for the thousands we are wasting, see if we can't save a few pence;" and it is almost superfluous to add that the saving is effected in the very way which is likely to produce the keenest sense of injustice amongst the Indian people. As some small compensation for the inequality under which the natives were placed in having to come to England to compete in the Indian Civil Service Examinations, eight Scholarships of the annual value of £200 each were granted; it was necessary to save something, and these scholarships were abolished. Why, the whole sum saved does not represent a fifth of the interest of the money spent in providing a country-house for the Governor of Bombay. But this is not all. When the Scholarships were abolished, it was said that some natives should be admitted direct to the Civil Service. This promise has remained as much a dead letter as if it had never been given. Let me earnestly entreat the House of Commons and the English nation not to delude themselves with the belief that such acts as these are not felt and are not commented upon by the Indian people. They are talked about, and they kindle a sense of injustice in millions of human breasts, and this sense of injustice it will require all our wisdom and all our statesmanship to allay. I believe that the great mass of the English nation desires that our rule in India should be for the good of the people. Our errors and our shortcomings are due more to ignorance than to intention. It has been proverbially a somewhat thankless task

to attempt to direct attention in this House to the affairs of our great dependency. The subject is one of such vast extent and importance that it is necessary to labour at it for years to obtain anything like a complete knowledge of the subject. For some years I have devoted almost the whole spare time at my disposal to the question, and no one can be more conscious than I am of my imperfect knowledge. Whenever I have attempted to direct the attention of this House to Indian affairs, it has invariably happened, as it has on the present occasion, that I have aroused the irritability of the Under Secretary, and been censured from the Treasury bench for my presumption. No amount of labour, no dread of an Under Secretary, and no Ministerial rebukes can, however, be of any consequence compared with the importance of doing whatever may lie in one's power to create an adequate amount of interest in India. My experience in this House has at least taught me that when a Minister is very angry it is the clearest indication a private member possibly can have that it is his duty to persevere with the subject he has in hand. This, at any rate, is my firm resolve with regard to the affairs of India. No one can deny that the people of India consider that they are primarily governed by the British Parliament; and it is to this House they look for a redress of their grievances. A German diplomatist and statesman once said that nothing struck him so much as this, that, in Germany, the possession of India was looked upon as the greatest distinction which England had obtained, and that the loss of India, through misgovernment, would be the greatest blow

to our reputation, and would be fatal to our prestige; and yet, he said, so little did we seem to appreciate the vast responsibility of the trust we had assumed, that he found there was not so much attention given to Indian affairs, and there was not so much known of the subject, in England as in Germany. Fully sharing in the opinion that the loss of India would be the greatest disaster and the greatest dishonour that could befall this country, and would be a great misfortune to the Indian people themselves, let us hope that this country may shew a kindlier sympathy with their feelings, and a firmer determination to do them justice. Fifteen years ago, the Queen issued a proclamation which produced a deep impression from one end of India to the other. She said, speaking as the head of the English nation, "We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects, and those obligations, by the blessing of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil." If we still desire that this promise should be kept, are we not bound to do everything that can be done, by wise administration and by rigid economy, to avoid that increase of financial burdens which, in the words of one whose loss we all deplore, has already produced a feeling of discontent amongst all classes in India, and has created a political danger the magnitude of which can hardly be over-estimated?

INDIAN FINANCE.

INDIAN BUDGET[1], 1873.

FIFTEEN years ago it was proclaimed by the Queen, speaking in the name of the English nation, that "We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects, and those obligations, by the blessing of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil." A more solemn promise than is contained in these words was never given by a great nation. How has it been fulfilled? When what has happened this evening is known by the Indian people, an impression will be produced through the length and breadth of that land that the promise, potent as it might have been in its influence for good, is to be altogether ignored. When the Indian Budget is introduced at a quarter-past ten o'clock at the very

[1] The Under Secretary for India, Mr Grant Duff, made his annual statement on the Indian Budget at a quarter-past ten on Thursday evening, July 31st, 1873. Mr Fawcett rose at half-past eleven to reply to Mr Grant Duff, and moved the following resolution: "That in the opinion of this House, the present constitution of the Government of India fails to secure an efficient or economical management of its finances, and that this House views with apprehension the state of local taxation in that country, and is of opinion that its financial condition must be regarded as unsatisfactory so long as the Income-Tax forms its only financial reserve."

fag end of the Session, when it is arranged that the only discussion which the Government gives to Indian affairs is brought forward at a time specially selected for its inconvenience, when the Indian people see that more respect is shewn to the most trumpery question ever debated in this House than is vouchsafed to questions vitally affecting their welfare—when all this is made as clear to them as the sun at noonday, can they arrive at any other conclusion, than that the Government is bent on pursuing the suicidal course of treating the affairs of India with contemptuous neglect? The Under Secretary (Mr Grant Duff), in the course of the remarks to which we have just listened, has described me as the spokesman of a financial panic. I will presently shew what amount of truth there is in this assertion, but I will now simply say that in anything I have ever done in reference to India my object has been not to excite financial panics, but I have been, and I hope always shall be, influenced by no other motive than to do the little which can be done by one member of this House to arouse an adequate amount of interest in the welfare of the great dependency which we have taken upon ourselves to govern. When the Indian Budget was discussed last year, I was permitted through the kind indulgence of the House to occupy so large a portion of the modicum of time usually allotted to Indian affairs, that many may not unreasonably think I ought to be silent on the present occasion. But at the close of the remarks which I then made, I ventured to promise that I would devote all the time at my disposal to the subject of India. The result has been that I cannot be silent on the present occasion.

The Under Secretary last year predicted that nothing I could say in reference to India could possibly be of any value or importance, but a remarkable change seems to have come over the spirit of the scene. His attitude has entirely altered, for he has now paid me the compliment of devoting a considerable portion of his speech to answering me by anticipation. Taking the first clause in my resolution which refers to defects in the constitution of the Government of India, he appears to be puzzled to hit upon the defects to which I allude, and he cannot understand in what respect the present Government of India fails to secure an efficient and economical management of its finances. Before I conclude I believe it will not be difficult to shew that the finances of India cannot be managed either efficiently or economically whilst the system of her government remains as it is. Nothing will be more easy than to verify this assertion by adducing specific instances of almost incredible waste and extravagance. But what seems to excite the greatest surprise in the Under Secretary is that the local taxation of India should be brought under the consideration of this House as a subject calculated to excite grave apprehension. He passed the question lightly by as if it were one scarcely worthy of any notice. But there was sitting by his side the Right Hon. gentleman (Mr Ayrton) who has now for three years presided over the Finance Committee with an impartiality and a courtesy which every member of that committee must, I am sure, be anxious to recognize. It is worthy of remark, that whereas the Under Secretary only condescended to spend an occasional hour in the com-

mittee, Mr Ayrton, though chairman of another committee, has scarcely ever been absent. Day after day during the present session, when the Under Secretary was absent, Mr Ayrton listened to some of the most striking evidence from the comptroller of the finances on the present state of local taxation in India. That evidence must have convinced him and every one who heard it that not only is the state of local taxation in India such as to excite our apprehension, but that it hangs over India at the present time like a threatening cloud, and is producing so much alarm and discontent that it is rapidly becoming our chief difficulty and danger in the government of that country. The last statement in the resolution I am about to move, that the financial condition of India must be regarded as unsatisfactory whilst the income-tax forms our only financial reserve, is entirely corroborated by the speech of the Under Secretary himself. He has admitted that the income-tax has been surrendered for political reasons. These political reasons have been so urgent that rather than continue the tax the surplus of revenue over expenditure is reduced to almost nothing; and yet he acknowledges that we have so entirely exhausted our financial resources in India that before ten years have elapsed it will in all probability be necessary again to impose the income-tax. Was there ever a more damaging confession? .. Talk about being the spokesman of financial panics! Is it possible to give a more alarming description of a country than to say that in ten years it will be necessary to reimpose a tax which has now been surrendered, when the money which it yields is urgently wanted, because of the

political dangers associated with its collection? Before proceeding to notice the figures of this year's budget it will not be out of place to make some remarks on the surrender of the income-tax. The House probably has not forgotten all that was said last year in favour of the tax by the very Government which is now obliged to relinquish it. We were then told that the tax was collected without difficulty and without abuse, and that it was the only way in which the wealthy were made to contribute their proper share to the State. Well, if all this was true, the surrender of the income-tax has been an act of the grossest financial injustice. Under all circumstances it is unjust to let the wealthy escape their proper share of taxation. But in India this injustice is concentrated with maximum intensity, for in no country in the world is there probably so great a gulf between the very wealthy and the poor. There are a few who are enormously rich. These, according to the Government, will now almost entirely escape taxation, whereas there is not to be the minutest fraction of diminution in the pressure of taxation upon the great mass of the people, who, as I shall presently shew upon the highest authority, are so miserably poor that they can barely obtain subsistence. We must, therefore, come to the conclusion either that the Government has committed an act of injustice and folly in relinquishing the income-tax, or that the arguments which they put forward last year in defence of the tax were simply a tissue of fallacies and errors. We may accept the latter alternative as the one least humiliating to the Government; we need not hesitate, moreover, to accept it as a true explanation of what

has taken place, when we discover that what was said last year in defence of the income-tax was based upon such reckless and random assertions, that the Under Secretary, after declaring that he could bring forward five authorities in favour of the tax for one that could be brought forward by its opponents, was finally reduced to the pitiful expedient of resting his case upon the opinion of a single official and a native newspaper; and the native newspaper took the earliest opportunity of stating that it had always opposed the tax, and that its opinions had been wholly misrepresented. This evening, however, the Under Secretary having more authorities at hand in favour of the tax when he has to explain its relinquishment, than he had when he was obliged to justify its continuance, assures us that a whole list of distinguished names might be quoted in favour of the tax. Further examination will, I believe, shew that all of those who are supposed to favour the tax have expressed the most decided opinion that the greatest possible mischief would result if there were frequent variations in the rate at which the tax was levied. These variations would of course take place if the income-tax became the only reserve from which deficiencies in the revenue had to be made up. Great stress has been laid by the Under Secretary upon what Lord Lawrence has said in favour of the tax. It is impossible for the Under Secretary to place a higher value upon the opinion of Lord Lawrence than I do. In the course of the remarks I am about to make I shall again and again appeal to the testimony of Lord Lawrence as the highest authority upon Indian questions. But the Under Secretary, when referring to him

as a supporter of the income-tax, forgot to tell the House that he spoke in terms of the severest condemnation of such a tax if it were liable to frequent variations. Under such circumstances, he said, the tax would be unsuited to India, and would produce the greatest mischief. But in spite of all that is now said by the Under Secretary, to cover his retreat from the untenable position that he took up last year in defence of the income-tax, he knows perfectly well that in abandoning it the Governor General and the Secretary of State have come not only to a wise, but to a necessary decision. No statesman can commit an act of more mischievous pedantry than to assume that because a tax is adapted to one country it is equally suited to another country the social condition of which is entirely different. The Under Secretary has divulged the true state of the case when he has virtually admitted, that although it may be desirable to continue the income-tax in England, it has had for political reasons to be abandoned in India. The character of these reasons can be readily indicated. Again and again have we been told of the abuses connected with the levying of the income-tax in India, of the number of people who are wrongly assessed, of the oppression and extortion which result, and that consequently the tax produces an amount of annoyance to the people altogether disproportionate to the small revenue it yields. But it may be said, a blunder has no doubt been committed; it has now, however, been repaired, and there can therefore be no good in dwelling on the errors of the past. It would be quite superfluous to say a word about the past imposition of the income-tax if it had been abo-

lished never to be imposed again, but the Under Secretary has himself confessed that ten years will not elapse before it will probably be again necessary to resort to the income-tax; and I believe it will be easy to adduce conclusive reasons to shew that not only is the Under Secretary correct in this opinion, but that unless a fundamental change is at once introduced into the management of the finances of India, not ten years, no, not five years, will pass before a much more onerous income-tax will have to be imposed than has ever yet been levied in India. The House cannot too seriously consider the grave reflections which are suggested by such a financial situation, for it signifies that our chief reliance for raising extra revenue in India must be in a tax which has had to be abandoned for those political reasons to which reference has already been made, a tax which has been condemned in the most uncompromising terms by those who have been most specially concerned with the financial administration of India. I am anxious not to weary the House with an unnecessary number of quotations, but I will direct its particular attention to the following opinions which have been expressed by three successive Finance Ministers of India. Sir Charles Trevelyan resigned a position second only in importance to that of Governor General rather than be a party to the levying of the tax. Mr Laing has recently declared that "the income-tax is about as bad and obnoxious a mode of raising revenue as it is possible to imagine in a country like India." Mr Massey has gone so far as to affirm that "nothing on earth would induce him to hold office as Finance Minister if the condition imposed upon him by the

Secretary of State were the maintenance of the income-tax as an ordinary source of revenue." And now I would ask the House, would any one be justified in remaining silent, if he believes that a tax which has been thus condemned will inevitably have to be re-imposed, and the danger which thus threatens India will be brought upon her, because her money is wasted in extravagance which can be avoided, and because her Government is so arranged that the administration of her finances can neither be efficient nor economical? But referring to the figures of the present year's Budget, which has this evening been laid before us, it may be thought that we ought at any rate at the present time to take a hopeful view of Indian finance. Not only does the experience of the past warn us that we ought to be very cautious in drawing conclusions from the figures of a single year's Budget, but I believe I shall be presently able to shew that associated with the figures which have been detailed to us by the Under Secretary, there is an amount of complexity and confusion the penetration of which would baffle the utmost financial ingenuity. Although the Under Secretary has described me as the spokesman of financial panics, yet unconsciously he has paid me so high a compliment that I feel I have now a more powerful incentive than ever to continue to devote as much attention as possible to Indian affairs. We were reminded by the Under Secretary that during three years previous to 1870 there had been deficits amounting to £6,299,216, and that during the last three years there had been surpluses to the amount of £4,725,836. It is somewhat significant that at the very time

when the tide thus began to turn, at the very time when the Government was somewhat checked in their career of wanton extravagance, I was severely censured and contemptuously upbraided from the Treasury Bench for my presumption in endeavouring to do what little lay in my power to bring the pressure of public opinion to bear upon the Indian Government, and to direct the attention of this House to the critical position of Indian finance. Can there be any doubt that there would now be the same deficits as there were three years since, can there be any doubt that the Indian Government would be at the present moment spending just as much money as they were then, if this House did not take an increased interest in Indian questions, and if the Indian Finance Committee had not during the last three years exercised a constant watchfulness over Indian finance? But now, returning to the figures of this year's Budget, I will proceed to shew why it is impossible to deduce from them any trustworthy conclusions as to the true financial position of India. Any one who has listened to the evidence given before the Finance Committee cannot fail to have been struck with the impenetrable confusion thrown over Indian finance by the perplexing distinction between public works extraordinary and public works ordinary. Then again not the slightest reliance can be placed on any statement of revenue and expenditure whilst there are fluctuations in the cash balances of many millions a year. The cash balances rose in 1870-1 from 16 millions to 20 millions, and in the next year to 24 millions; they then suddenly sank to 20 millions, and during the present financial year the

Under Secretary has informed us the cash balances will be again reduced by more than four millions. Such unaccountable fluctuations afford an unbounded field for exploits of financial strategy. No one has ever been able to give an intelligible description of these cash balances. I believe the Prime Minister, great as is his mastery over finance, would be utterly baffled if he attempted to fathom the mystery. So far as any insight can be obtained into the subject, it appears that these cash balances are an *omnium gatherum*, composed partly of unexpended loans, of previous years' surpluses, and of unexhausted credits. This being the case, is it not obvious that when in one year the balances are reduced by more than four millions, a statement which shews, as this year's Budget does, a pretended balance of revenue over expenditure of £150,000, is not worth the paper on which it is printed? The Under Secretary wishes us to believe that these four millions are going to be devoted to remunerative public works. These public works will not be finished in a single year; money will be required for them next year. The cash balances cannot be continually drawn upon. They are only a temporary resource. Unless therefore there is fresh borrowing, another large deficit is inevitable. Again I would ask, can the Under Secretary or any other official prove to the House that none of the money which is this year to be taken from the cash balances is to be devoted to the payment of ordinary current expenses? and until this is shewn, can we feel the slightest confidence that the present year's surplus has not been manufactured by the simple process of devoting some portion of an un-

expended loan to ordinary income? We know what adepts Indian Financiers have become in the art of devoting capital to income. The Comptroller of the Finances has admitted that in one year, 1869-70, when a surplus was announced, this surplus had been obtained solely by this appropriation of capital to income, and in that year, if it had not been for this, there would have been a deficit of more than £500,000. Amongst other instances of appropriation of capital to income in that year, £427,000, representing accumulations arising from the sale of waste lands, appeared as an item of ordinary income. It had been specially enacted that the money resulting from such sales should be employed as capital, either by being invested or in paying off debt. But so anxious was the Government of India to manufacture a surplus that this law, and in fact every other consideration that should influence prudent financiers or careful statesmen, were cast to the winds. Many as have been the strange disclosures made before the Indian Finance Committee during the last three years, nothing perhaps throws a more instructive light on the way in which Indian affairs are managed, than the confession made by official after official of this appropriation of capital to income. One official frankly admitted that in looking over Indian accounts, whenever it is stated that the Government holds some fund, it may be almost invariably concluded that the money has long since been spent. The fund has disappeared, and the only memorial of its former existence is a debt of exactly equivalent amount. Lately, we have had in our own country what is known as the Post-Office scandal. Because the authorities in that

Department have transferred a certain amount of capital from one department to another, the transaction is considered so grave that an influential committee of this House was at once appointed to investigate it. But if this transfer of capital is a scandal, who can suggest the name which will adequately characterise the far more grave proceeding of appropriating capital to income, as has been done again and again in India? It has been attempted to defend the proceeding by an argument which is essentially unsound. It is said that as the Indian Government has been habitually borrowing, and has moreover contracted loans in the very years in which these appropriations took place, no good would have been done by investing these funds, instead of appropriating them as income. But if there is one thing more certain than another in finance, it is that expenditure, and especially so when there is a tendency to extravagance, is in no small degree regulated by the amount of money which there is to spend. If it had been known in 1869-70 that instead of there being a surplus, as was announced, there was a considerable deficit, is it not more than probable that in order to make both ends meet, some extravagance might have been forbidden, some economy might have been enforced? It has been necessary to make these precautionary remarks in order to prevent too implicit confidence being reposed in the figures of this year's Budget. But even admitting that there is no error in the accounts, that the stated revenue is the legitimate income of the year, that all that has been expended during the year has been fairly brought into this year's account, yet it is impossible for any of us to

ascertain,—I doubt if the Secretary of State even knows himself—to what extent the comparatively favourable balance between revenue and expenditure in the present year is due to the sudden cessation of expenditure in various public works which have already been commenced, and which, on the one hand, cannot be abandoned without wasting the money already expended, and cannot, on the other hand, be suspended without adding greatly to their ultimate cost. Nothing connected with the financial administration of India has been more conclusively demonstrated before the Indian Finance committee than the waste, mismanagement, and extravagance which have characterised the Public Works Department; and no circumstance has more powerfully promoted this waste and extravagance than the impulsiveness with which public works have been undertaken, and the suddenness with which their construction has been suspended. The Under Secretary has advised the House carefully to read the evidence which has been lately given before the committee by Lord Lawrence. In all sincerity I will repeat that advice; and I will venture to make one further suggestion, that the reading of the evidence of Lord Lawrence should be supplemented by an equally careful perusal of the evidence of Gen. Strachey, who, it must be remembered, was specially summoned by the Government as the witness most competent to defend the Public Works Department. Any one who reads his evidence must come to the conclusion that I have certainly not employed too strong language in saying that the Department has been characterised by waste, mismanagement, and extravagance. In order, however,

to illustrate what has been done by this Department, I will direct the attention of the House to the following narrative, which is not an exceptional but a typical case, and every particular of which has been corroborated by official testimony. The Sangor barracks, after taking 4½ years to erect, and costing £165,000, have lately been pronounced by an official committee to be so badly constructed and so unsafe that they will have to be abandoned. They have in fact never been occupied, and the £165,000 has consequently been absolutely wasted. The walls were so rotten that a walking-stick could be pushed into them. It is to be particularly remarked that the work was not done by contract, but was entirely undertaken by the Public Works Department. The House will be instructed and amused to hear the costly and complicated system of officialism that was brought into operation to achieve so notable a result. The Executive Engineer, who was apparently selected because he had not the slightest knowledge of masonry work, was assisted by an equally ignorant European subordinate, and was in charge of the works throughout their erection. Above the Executive Engineer was placed a Superintending Engineer, and above him again was the Chief Engineer or local head of the Department. This Superintending Engineer paid only three visits to the works during their construction, and only wrote one Inspector's report, in which everything was described as going on satisfactorily. The Chief Engineer only visited the works once, and no record of any report of his has been preserved. Such management would bring ruin on any private business in six months, and yet this is the

Department to which it is proposed to intrust the expenditure of 70 millions on State Railways and State Canals! This is the Department which has lately been glorified by the Under Secretary as being likely to return to India with compound interest the benefit which Asia has in the past conferred upon Europe. The interest will indeed be compound. Enough has probably been said about this year's Budget to induce Honourable Members to exercise due caution in drawing too hasty conclusions as to the future of Indian finance from the expenditure and revenue of a single year. In order properly to estimate the true financial position of India, we must take a wider survey, and must carefully examine causes which are more permanent in their operation. Now the cardinal point on which I have before insisted, and which it is of the first importance to impress upon the House, is that whilst in England our revenue is far more elastic than our expenditure, in India, on the contrary, the expenditure is far more elastic than the revenue. Many of the most important taxes in England yield far more than they did a few years since. The income-tax has increased in productiveness a hundred per cent. since it was first imposed by Sir Robert Peel. And since 1850 the tea, sugar, and spirit duties, and many other important sources of revenue, have increased in productiveness from 60 to 100 per cent. Excessive therefore as our expenditure has been, we are able at the same time to have an increased expenditure and a most important reduction in taxation. In India, on the contrary, there is but a very slight natural increase in the most important sources of revenue. Two-fifths of the

entire revenue is yielded by the land, and the land-revenue has only increased 20 per cent. in 20 years. The salt duty does not increase in productiveness in a greater ratio. Excise and customs together only yield about £5,000,000, and the yearly increase is insignificant. This slowly-increasing revenue has to meet a rapidly increasing expenditure. Expenditure in India has increased at a greater rate than expenditure in our own country, where the revenue, to use the expression of the Prime Minister, has been advancing by "leaps and bounds." What is the inevitable result? In England an increasing expenditure can be simultaneously accompanied with a great reduction in taxation. The present Government having done little to reduce expenditure has been enabled to remit £9,000,000 of taxation; and although our expenditure is now £70,000,000, not only have no new taxes been imposed since the time when the expenditure was only £50,000,000 a year, but a great number of taxes have been reduced or repealed which would now probably yield not less than £40,000,000 per annum. In India, on the contrary, the increase in expenditure which has for years been going on necessitates an increase of taxation, which, to quote the words of the late Lord Mayo, produces a wide-spread feeling of discontent from one end of that country to the other. But this is not all; the contrast between England and India is not half exhausted; it can be presented in another and a more striking light. A sudden increase in the expenditure of a nation may be brought about by so many different causes that it may at any moment be necessary to obtain a considerably additional revenue. These causes

are so obvious that it is scarcely necessary to enumerate them. The breaking out of war largely adds to military expenditure; India has a frontier war on an average once in three years; unpropitious seasons affect the revenue in two ways: existing taxes become less productive, and the Government may have to spend large sums in direct relief of the people. The revenue of India, from the fact that a large portion of it is derived from the land, is probably more liable to be influenced by unfavourable seasons than that of any other country. Again, a rise in prices increases almost every item of expenditure except the interest on the public debt. This is of course a matter of no consequence if the items which compose the public revenue increase in the same ratio. A moment's consideration however shews that a rise in general prices would, so far as India is concerned, make a much greater addition to her expenditure than it would to her revenue. As previously stated, two-fifths of her revenue is obtained entirely from the land. A considerable portion of this is for ever fixed in pecuniary amount, and much of the remainder is upon a 30 years' settlement, and therefore is only susceptible of an increase as the land gradually falls in for re-settlement. When it is remembered that the gold discoveries in Australia and California quadrupled the supply of gold, when it is also remembered that the leading authorities agree that there has been a steadily marked rise in general prices, that this rise has not been less than 40 per cent. in India, and that experience has shewn that a considerable time has to elapse before the full effects of an increase in the supply of the precious metals are felt; when these things

are remembered, can any one doubt that it is very probable that there may be a very marked rise in prices in India during the next few years? It therefore appears that various circumstances may cause the expenditure in India to be much larger a few years hence than it is at the present moment. Is there any security that the great increase in expenditure that has been going on in India for the last 17 years will not continue in the future upon the same scale? This being the case, I will earnestly ask the House to take into consideration what appears to me to be by far the most serious circumstance connected with the financial position of India. If it became necessary in our own country to raise 5, 10, or 20 millions of additional revenue, it could be done with comparative facility. The income-tax might be increased, and the duties on some articles of general consumption might be raised. If the nation thought that the extra expenditure was really required, the additional taxation would be readily borne, the stability of the Government would not be in the slightest degree weakened, and the prosperity of the country would be scarcely retarded. But if it suddenly became necessary to raise five millions of additional revenue in India, is there any one who has ever held an influential position in the Government of that country who can come forward and say that it could be obtained without resorting to an impost which has been abandoned, and without levying other taxation which would produce an amount of discontent that would make the boldest tremble for the security of our empire in India? Again and again have I addressed the enquiry to those

most competent to form an opinion:—"How could £5,000,000 of additional revenue be obtained in India?" The answer invariably given is, "We know there is no way of doing it except by reimposing the income-tax, and by levying other taxation entirely unsuited to the people of India." Only a few weeks since I had an opportunity of questioning Lord Lawrence on this subject. No living man has had a longer or a more distinguished Indian career. He is perhaps by far the highest authority that can now be consulted on such a subject, for he is the only survivor of the illustrious men who have been Governors-General of India. After admitting the extent to which the land revenue is incapable of expansion, he was asked whether there was any possibility of increasing the next important item of Indian revenue, viz. opium. He agreed that we obtain from opium at the present moment the utmost it is possible to obtain; he further admitted that the Chinese, anxious to discourage the consumption of opium, had hitherto imposed various restrictions on its growth, but finding we were at any moment ready to go to war rather than be deprived of the opportunity of selling opium in China, he thought that the Government of that country was not unlikely to relinquish as perfectly hopeless all its attempts to check the consumption of opium; it would then be freely grown in China; this would of course greatly diminish the demand for Indian opium, and he therefore thought that the revenue which India obtained from opium was more likely to decrease than to increase. Let me here parenthetically remark, that this opium traffic is a striking instance of the moral example

offered by Christian England to those whom the Archbishop lately called the heathen Hindoos. The Under Secretary has this evening hinted that the large revenue yielded by opium shows how much we are befriended by Providence. Some will think that it rather shews how much another power, which I need not particularize, is on our side. With regard to the next important item of revenue, salt, Lord Lawrence said that under no circumstances whatever would he increase the salt duty; he thought that it ought if possible to be reduced; he described the great harm that was done to our rule in India by the present high rates of duty. It is difficult to make the people in the Punjaub believe that they derive great advantages from British rule when they see before them literally mountains of salt, not a handful of which they are allowed to take without paying this heavy duty, and when at the same time they know that if they just cross the frontier into a native state, they can get salt almost as freely as we in England get water. This opinion of Lord Lawrence is strikingly corroborated by the present Lieut.-Governor of Bengal, Sir George Campbell. I this evening received, through the courtesy of the Under Secretary, the last report of the moral and material progress of India, and one of the first passages I happened to read in it was a declaration of Sir G. Campbell, that he would rather have his right hand cut off than be a party to the increase of the salt duty. In many parts of India it is certain, as stated by Lord Hobart, the present Governor of Madras, that the salt duty has reached a point at which consumption is greatly checked. Thus an in-

crease of 18 per cent. in the duty in Madras has only produced an increase of revenue of 12 per cent. With regard to customs, Lord Lawrence was doubtful whether if these duties were increased any material addition would be made to the very small revenue that they now yield. Nothing perhaps is a more striking feature of the condition of India than the small revenue of only £2,750,000 which is raised from customs. The mass of the people are so poor that no taxable foreign product is in general use. With regard to raising revenue from export duties, Lord Lawrence said that, *theoretically*, a considerable increase in revenue would be yielded by imposing an export duty upon various Indian products, such for instance as jute, and he thought that considering the peculiar circumstances of India, an export duty would be a good way of adding to her revenues: but then he went on to remark, *practically*, no reliance whatever can be placed on obtaining additional revenue from this source; the Secretary of State is supreme in all financial questions, he is a member of a cabinet whose fortunes are scarcely affected by any considerations so trifling as what is likely most to promote the interests of India, but whose very existence may be at any moment terminated by a hostile vote of the commercial interest. Dundee and other manufacturing towns would oppose an export duty on jute, and their opposition would have far more weight with an English cabinet than the recommendation of a Governor-General. Lord Lawrence having gone through the other items of revenue in India, came to the conclusion that if it was immediately necessary to obtain additional revenue,

no existing tax could be increased, and no new tax except the income-tax could be imposed. One of the propositions in the resolution which I shall ask the House to affirm, viz. that the income-tax forms the only financial reserve in India, is therefore corroborated by the authority of one in whose opinion the Under Secretary particularly enjoins us to repose confidence. It is impossible to arrive at any result which will more plainly exhibit the critical nature of our financial position in India. But only a part of the story has yet been told. We are too prone to think that there are no financial questions in India to engage our attention but those connected with Imperial taxation. This erroneous idea is encouraged by the tone of official speeches in this House. Indian budgets have again and again been introduced without anything more than the most casual reference to local taxation. The Under Secretary would evidently this evening not even have alluded to the question, had he been simply making a Budget speech, and had he not thought it expedient to notice by anticipation the resolution which he knew was going to be moved. When we observe how the subject of local taxation is at the present time engaging the attention of this House, when its importance has at length become so generally recognized that it now occupies a foremost place in English politics, I hope, acting on the old adage, that a fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind, we shall not forget that at the present moment local taxation is threatening the Indian people with a far greater amount of hardship and annoyance than it is ever likely to bring upon our own country. Here

an increase of local expenditure leads to higher rates being imposed upon land, houses, and business premises. This is hard enough to bear, but we have the satisfaction of knowing that there are limits within which the rate-collector must restrict his demands. He cannot lay hands upon our incomes; he cannot impose countless restrictions upon trade, and cause every individual an indescribable amount of worry by making almost every article which is bought or sold subject to local taxation. All this which cannot happen in England has however to be borne in India. The Comptroller of the Finances admitted that in the towns of India there is not a single article of food, nor a single article of clothing, nor a single commodity which is of human use, which may not be rendered liable to local taxation by some recent legislation. There are octroi and transit duties; cesses have been imposed upon the land for roads and education, an onerous house-tax has been levied; and to such terrible straits was the Government of Bombay brought by a career of reckless and unprecedented extravagance, upon which I shall presently comment, that they were permitted to impose simply as a local impost the worst and most oppressive income-tax that ever was devised by the perversity of man. The House will scarcely believe when I tell them, that this income-tax was imposed upon the very poorest class of labourers. Paupers could scarcely escape it, for incomes of £5 a year were made liable to it. Could we in this country have a more convincing proof of misgovernment, than if in a time of peace our financial exigencies became such that the income-tax had

to be imposed upon the entire people, not even the labourer struggling for existence, upon 10*s.* a week being permitted to escape? In order that you should adequately understand what has been going on in India, I will presently shew you that the very Government who are responsible for this monstrous tax, squandered the money thus wrung out of a miserable and impoverished population as lavishly and as heedlessly as if it were water rained down from heaven. £150,000 expended in building a country-house for the Governor of Bombay; the expenses of his personal establishment permitted in a few years to increase 360 per cent.; nearly £2,000,000 expended in buying at par from certain influential persons a half-bankrupt scheme, the shares of which were, at the time the Government began to negotiate the purchase, unsaleable at two-fifths the price the Government ultimately paid for them—these and many other transactions must be carefully considered, for until they are properly understood, it is impossible to form any estimate of the feelings that must be aroused in India by the increase not only of imperial but still more of local taxation. Onerous taxation may be submitted to when the necessities of the State require it, but it must inevitably generate the most serious discontent when it is in no small degree due to such acts of improvidence as those which have just been indicated. But as the House may think I have given an exaggerated description of the state of local taxation in India, I will direct the particular attention of honourable members to the following description of the present grievous pressure of local taxation upon the people of Madras. The description

is taken from the last *Report of the Moral and Material Progress of India*, which, as I have before said, has this evening been placed in my hands by the Under Secretary. "In Madras the local cesses are many and various. But what the people most feel and dread are the frequent changes. A ryot either has to pay, or is in imminent danger of having to pay, about a dozen different kinds of taxes and fees. There are the land, water, house, and income-taxes; the road, irrigation and village service cesses; the education rate, the toll on roads, the octroi, the stamp duties, and registration fees. It is beginning to be felt, in this Presidency, that some pledge ought to be given that there will be no further taxation for 30 years, except in case of war." In the face of such official statements as these, is it not trifling with the House to urge, as it has been this evening, that the amount levied in India from each individual in the form either of local or imperial taxation is in the aggregate small? Thus the Under Secretary has told us that the entire amount raised by local taxation in India is only about three millions and a half, and he seems to think it particularly creditable to the Government that taxation in India, including the land revenue, imposes upon each inhabitant a charge of 3*s*. 7½*d*. But, in the first place, it must be remembered that it is difficult for us in this country to form any conception of the poverty of the Indian people. Lord Lawrence has stated that the great mass of the people are so poor that they can scarcely obtain the barest subsistence. In many parts of India the ordinary labourer does not earn more than 3*d*. a day. It is often stated that wages have risen in

India. But it can be shewn on the most conclusive evidence, that the rise in wages has not kept pace with the rise in price of the necessaries of life, and consequently the real remuneration of labour has diminished rather than increased. But the small amount yielded by the income-tax, and the comparatively small production of wealth in India will probably bring home to us with the greatest distinctness the almost incredible difference between the wealth of England and India. Although India is seven times more populous than our own country, yet an income-tax in India is only one-eleventh as productive as it is in England. This is shewn by the fact that an income-tax of one per cent., or about 2½*d.* in the £., yielded only about £500,000 in India, whereas a similar tax in England would yield more than £5,500;000. As therefore the income-tax is eleven times more productive in England than in India, while England is only one-seventh as populous, it would appear that England in proportion to its population is seventy-seven times more wealthy than India[1]. Let this be borne in mind when statistics are so confidently paraded to prove that taxation is not burdensome in

[1] As it has been said that the productiveness of the income-tax does not provide the fairest test for comparing the wealth of two countries, I thought it advisable in a subsequent part of the debate to make a comparison between the wealth of England and India from data supplied by the Under Secretary himself. It was stated by him two or three years since, when making his Budget speech, that the annual aggregate production of wealth in India was about £350,000,000, whereas the aggregate annual production of wealth in England was 2½ times greater than this. When therefore the difference in the population of the two countries is taken into account, it follows that England in proportion to her population is, according to the calculation of the Under Secretary himself, about eighteen times wealthier than India. It would therefore appear that, accepting the Under Secretary's statistics of taxation, the people of India in proportion to their wealth are more heavily taxed than we are in England.

India. But even if it could be proved—which I believe it cannot be—that the proportionate amount which is taken by taxation from a man's income is not larger in India than in England, yet there cannot be a greater fallacy than to suppose that taxation is not more onerous in the one country than in the other. Where the people are so miserably poor as they are in India, taxation, however light it may appear to be, is obtained by the people curtailing themselves of some necessary of life. In a wealthy country such as England, a large revenue can be raised by taxing luxuries which are consumed by the people. Five shillings taken from the man who has only £5 a year represents not only a much greater sacrifice, but causes much greater suffering than taking £5 from an income of £100 a year, although the percentage of the tax is in each instance the same. The mischief, moreover, produced by local taxation cannot in any respect be measured by the amount of taxation actually raised. The most serious charge to be brought against the present system is, that the extraordinary folly has been committed of giving legislative sanction to a host of taxes which have never been levied. What would be thought in our own country if an act were passed, before it was ascertained whether the money was or was not required, to impose taxes upon almost every kind of property and upon almost every article of daily use? And yet, great as would be the folly of such a proceeding in England, it is a hundred times more indefensible in India, where the people are far more suspicious and far more easily alarmed. A great apparatus of local taxation has been called into existence in India apparently

with no better reason than to torment the people; for not only have many taxes which have been sanctioned never been levied, but Lord Northbrook has during the present year suspended the operation of a great part of the local taxation scheme. The question naturally suggests itself:—How has it come to pass that local taxation has been forced into so prominent a position in India during the last few years, that whereas nothing was heard about it in the days of the East India Company, it is now one of our chief difficulties and dangers in the government of that country? Any one who takes the trouble to read the evidence that was given during the present session by the Comptroller of the Finances, will not only be able to answer this question, but will obtain an insight into one of the most extraordinary financial proceedings ever sanctioned by a Government. A few years since the Government of Lord Mayo—and no one has borne more willing testimony to the high character and personal worth of the late Governor-General than I have—driven into a corner to make both ends meet, hit upon a plan to which was given the somewhat plausible title of the decentralization scheme. This scheme, briefly explained, was simply the transfer of certain charges from imperial to local finance. Certain fixed grants from imperial funds were made to each local government to meet these charges, and any present or future deficit was to be made up out of local taxation. It is to be particularly remarked that these charges were not only certain gradually to increase, but the grants were almost invariably, even in the first instance, less than had annually been expended

up to that time. By this arrangement, therefore, local taxation had not only at once to bear a burden, but this burden is certain to increase in future years. By this device the imperial Government was relieved of about £350,000 per annum; but now let us inquire what has been the price which has been paid for this slight diminution in imperial expenditure. The price paid has been the passing of those various acts previously described, by which almost every commodity used by the Indian people is rendered liable to local taxation. The price which has been paid for this delusive relief of the Government—which, it must be remembered, is no relief to the people in the way of any reduction of imperial taxation—is the creation of that alarm and dissatisfaction which has caused Lord Napier to declare, that "at no period of the British rule in India have we had so little hold upon the affections of the people." We, in this country, justly so much object to centralization, that some have been apt to think that the decentralization scheme in India has been as good a thing as decentralization is with us; but on such a question there is no parallel between England and India. We object to centralization because it weakens that principle of local self-government which has perhaps done more than anything else to make our people self-reliant and independent, and to cherish in them a love of liberty. In India, however, we permit the people to enjoy none of the advantages of local self-government. We allow them to have no representative institutions either local or imperial. The decentralization scheme has done nothing whatever to increase local self-government, but, on the contrary, the

local taxes which it has necessitated have, more than any other taxation ever levied in India, been imposed in utter disregard of the wishes, the wants, and the habits of the people. One of the wisest statesmen who ever governed an Indian province, I refer to the late Sir Donald M'Cleod, who was not less distinguished for his skill as an administrator than for the affection he inspired in those over whom he ruled, repeatedly warned us against not only the impolicy but the peril of imposing any new tax without first consulting the wishes of the people; and yet under this recent development of local taxation the people have been either burdened or alarmed with innumerable new taxes, and no more trouble has been taken to ascertain their opinions or to consult their habits, than if a complicated system of new imposts was being arranged for a country with which they had not the slightest connection. There is, however, another circumstance associated with this growth of local taxation to which I wish particularly to draw the attention of the House. The more the system is carried out of transferring charges from imperial to local finance, the more will the state of taxation in India be concealed from this House, and thus escape the criticism of public opinion. No one who has taken any trouble to ascertain the opinions prevalent among the Indian people can, I think, fail to arrive at the conclusion that they look to the English Parliament to redress their wrongs, and that they regard this House as the ultimate arbiter of their destinies. Without staying here to enquire whether the abolition of the East India Company has been so unmixed an advantage as it was at one time supposed

to be, it cannot be doubted that since the time when that Company was for good or for ill abolished, the House of Commons is much more directly responsible for the government of India than it was before. I shall by and bye make some observations upon the connection which ought to exist between this House and India. It is, however, sufficient here to remark that the more information is kept from this House, the less likely is it that it will be able to discharge its responsibilities to India. There cannot be a more striking example of the extent to which the transfer of imperial charges to local funds will not only keep the English public but also this House ignorant of what is going on in India, than is afforded by the fact that, although the imperial income-tax in India was again and again referred to in this House, and numerous articles were written against it in the leading English newspapers, yet an act was passed to levy a far more burdensome income-tax in Bombay (for we have seen that it was to reach incomes of £5 a year, whereas all incomes below £100 a year were exempt from the imperial income-tax); and at the same time this local income-tax scarcely attracted any attention at all in this country; it was for a long time unnoticed in this House, and scarcely any reference was made to it by the English press. Before leaving the subject of local taxation, it is necessary to shew what an unfavourable position the Government must occupy in the eyes of the people, by constantly resorting to cesses or rates upon land. I am not now referring to the point that has been so keenly disputed in India, viz. whether under the permanent settlement the Government is

legally entitled to these cesses upon land; I am referring to the case of the thirty years' settlement, where it seems to be much more difficult to defend these cesses upon land. My honourable friend, the Member for Gravesend (Sir C. Wingfield), who for many years was engaged in arranging the land settlement of Oude, will tell you that the most distinct promise was given, that those who took land upon this thirty years' lease should pay as revenue 51½ per cent. of the produce, and that under no circumstances whatever should the demands of the Government exceed this percentage. We have his authority for saying that no promise could have been given in more explicit language, and every pains was taken at the time to make the people believe that the promise would be carried out, not only in its letter but in its spirit. I ask you to consider the feelings that must be entertained towards the Government when the people find that, in spite of this promise, the Government takes not 51½ per cent., but 52½ per cent. of the produce of the land, in consequence of the new cesses that have been recently imposed. The decentralization scheme was proposed just at the time when the public works mania was at its highest; and a proposition was actually sanctioned by the Government of India to make irrigation canals in the Punjaub, and if these canals did not pay 7 per cent. the cultivators of the land in the neighbourhood were to be charged for the water, whether they used it or not. Do not suppose that no harm has been done because this compulsory irrigation-rate was never actually levied. It is impossible adequately to estimate the alarm and irritation which the proposal created; in fact, as if it were

not enough greatly to increase local taxation, those who were responsible for the Government of India acted as if they were desirous to produce the maximum amount of harm and annoyance: for not only were the people burdened with new taxes, but they were constantly reminded that they might at any moment be made the victims of numberless other vexatious imposts which were kept in reserve. There is much else which I should like to say on the question of local taxation, but I cannot help thinking, without entering farther into the subject, that the House will agree with the 2nd proposition in the resolution I am about to move, viz. That the state of local taxation in India should be viewed with apprehension. But it may be asked, If there is so much to censure in the present administration of the finances of India, what are the remedies that you are prepared to suggest? It is not sufficient simply to make complaints and to point out shortcomings, the government of so vast a country as India is one of the most difficult tasks that ever has been undertaken; it is so difficult that mistakes are certain to be committed, and imperfections are certain to exist. Those therefore who find fault are bound to shew that under a different system there would be a better administration, there would be less extravagance, fewer errors and fewer shortcomings. All this I fully admit, and in attempting to point out in what manner I believe the administration of India may be improved, do not think I am so presumptuous as for one moment to suppose that it is possible for me to suggest a complete solution of the problem. I am fully conscious that there are those in this House who, if they give

adequate attention to the subject, would be able to render much more assistance to the complete solution of this problem than I shall ever be able to do. I make no other promise than to shew how some of the defects in the present system of governing India may be removed. It is very important for the House to bear in mind the salient features in the administration of India. All the officials in India, including the Governors of Madras and Bombay, are nominally the subordinates of the Governor General. I say nominally, because the power which is possessed, or perhaps more properly speaking, assumed, by the Governors of Bombay and Madras to communicate directly with the Secretary of State in Council, makes them in many respects independent of the Governor General. As Lord Lawrence admitted there thus arises an *imperium in imperio*. This is fatal to due administrative control, and to this circumstance may in no small degree be traced the extravagance which has characterised the Government of Bombay. The Governor General and the Secretary of State in Council are in many respects equal in position and authority. When, however, the Government of India was reconstituted upon the abolition of the East India Company, it was intended that the Secretary of State should be supreme in all questions of finance. He undoubtedly has the power to overrule the Governor General on any financial question, and nothing has been done directly to lessen the power originally conferred upon the Secretary of State in Council in reference to finance. But although nothing has been done directly, it was soon found that the Secretary of State, in consequence of his rela-

tions with the English Government, did not exercise so complete a control over Indian expenditure as it was intended he should do; and this control has been reduced almost to a minimum with regard to military expenditure, in consequence of the amalgamation of the Indian with the British army. The considerations suggested by this diminution in the control over the finances of India exercised by the minister responsible to Parliament, will bring out into strong relief many of the gravest defects in the present constitution of the Government of that country. It is in the first place obvious that the expenditure of India is in a very great degree influenced by the British Government. For instance, many charges have to be jointly borne by the two countries. If a certain amount has to be contributed, the question then arises,—What portion of this amount shall be borne by each country? The point upon which I wish particularly to insist is this: that whereas in the days of the East India Company India was in a position to secure for herself fair treatment in the arrangement of such a bargain, she has had, on the contrary, no reasonable chance of obtaining fair treatment since the Government of that country has been transferred from the East India Company to the Crown. This assertion is not only proved by the testimony of those most competent to form an opinion on the subject, but it shall be abundantly verified by specific examples. A host of witnesses have testified to the well-known fact that as the East India Company was one of the most powerful corporations, and as it possessed great parliamentary influence, it was able to offer effectual resistance if the British Government

ventured to make any unjust demands upon the revenues of India. The East India Company, having a direct personal interest in the finances of India, was bound by the most potent of all motives to exercise a constant and zealous watchfulness over her finances. Under the existing system we cannot feel the slightest security that any one will exercise the same watchfulness. This indicates the great distinction between the past and the present, and it will not be difficult to shew that it affords an explanation of the fact that whereas the administration of the finances of India was formerly distinguished by the most remarkable frugality, it is now characterised by the most reckless extravagance. There is now no guarantee whatever that if a question is brought forward affecting India, there will be any one in this House to represent her interests. As representatives of English constituencies, we are, of course, supposed to care first for England, and secondly for India. But perhaps it will be said, "India is represented in Parliament by two officials, the Secretary of State and the Under Secretary of State." But even if it is conceded that these officials are in no way wanting in ability or zeal, it still follows, from the nature of the case, that the protection which they are able to give to India, when any question arises suggesting a conflict of interest between her and England, must be of the most flimsy and worthless kind. In the first place we may ask:—"From whom do they derive their power?" "Who confers upon them their offices?" Not India, but England. It is the case of an arbitration between two disputants. What chance will there be of securing fair treatment if one of the parties in

the dispute not only appoints both the arbitrators, but can dismiss them both at pleasure? The Under-Secretary for India is simply a subordinate under the Cabinet, who can be dismissed at an hour's notice if he is too officious to his superiors, or, in other words, is too solicitous to do his duty to India. The Secretary of State for India is simply a member of a Cabinet whose existence depends upon the votes of an assembly in which India has no representation at all. If any financial arrangement between England and India has finally to be settled by the English Cabinet, not only has England 15 times more representation than India, but the whole Cabinet primarily derives its power from an assembly in which India has no voice. Hon. Members are no doubt aware that at the time when it was proposed to transfer the Government of India to the Crown, it was foreseen by many most competent to judge, that India would suffer in the manner just described from the loss of that power and influence which the East India Company could exercise on her behalf. Few men had greater official experience of Indian affairs than the late Mr J. S. Mill, and when it was proposed to abolish the East India Company, he emphatically warned us in what was justly described, I believe by the *Times*, as one of the ablest state papers ever written, that an incalculable injury would be inflicted on India, if nothing was done to bring into existence some influence which would constitute for India a protection similar to that which she derived from the East India Company. It was no doubt chiefly with the view of securing this object that the Council of the Secretary of State was appointed. It was sup-

posed that a body of gentlemen many of whom had spent a great portion of their lives in India, either in official positions or in mercantile pursuits, and the tenure of whose offices was to be unaffected by a change of the English Government,—it was supposed, I say, that such a Council, being at least as much interested in India as in England, and being bound to the former country by the ties of association, would be able to give to India most powerful and efficient protection whenever her interest required it. Great power was undoubtedly conferred upon this Council, for the Secretary of State cannot sanction any expenditure of Indian revenues unless he obtains the sanction of a majority of his Council. Nothing is farther from my intention than to say a single word in disparagement of the individual members of the Council. No one can deny that there have always been many members of the Council of the highest ability, who, in distinguished official careers in India, have rendered the greatest service to that country. Although as ready as any one can be to admit all this, it seems to me impossible to resist the conclusion that the Council in its actual working has not secured for India the advantages which were anticipated. The causes which have contributed to this result are various. In attempting to describe some of them, I am perfectly well aware that I am speaking on a subject so delicate and difficult, that I shall be very careful not to make any statement which cannot be supported by the opinions of those whose testimony is entitled to the greatest respect. On this particular question no one can speak with greater authority than Lord Lawrence,

for not only has he been Governor General, but after having served for 32 years in India he was appointed to the Council on his return to England. On being questioned as to how it happens that India so generally fails to obtain justice in her pecuniary relations with England, he said the Secretary of State could offer no effectual resistance, because he was overborne by political pressure. But how is it that the Council does not come to the aid of the Secretary of State? No charge can be thrown upon India without their consent. Why do they not strengthen his hands in resisting political pressure? Why do they not compel him to struggle against it? They might say: "We hold our present appointments to protect the interests of India; we receive our salaries from her revenues. By every obligation that a sacred trust can impose we are bound to protect her interests. No power on earth shall induce us to sanction what we know to be an injustice to her." Lord Lawrence hinted that a Council acting thus would be dismissed by the Government. All that I can say is, that if any Government were to attempt to do such a thing, and if they were not instantaneously displaced from power by a vote of this House, all sense of the duty which we owe as a nation to the great dependency we have taken upon ourselves to rule, would be so utterly dead, that the continuance of our Empire in the East could bring nothing but disgrace on ourselves, and misfortune upon the Indian people. It would of course be unjust to imply that the Council never offer any resistance to the political pressure which exercises such a potent influence on the Secretary of State, but example after example might be

quoted to prove that in this respect the Council has grievously disappointed the expectations of those who advocated its creation. One of the most experienced officials at the India Office has declared that India almost invariably fails to obtain justice when the interests of England and India are supposed to come into conflict. Sir Charles Trevelyan has stated that since the transfer of the Government of India to the Crown, India has again and again had to bear charges which not only would never have been submitted to, but which the British Government would never have attempted to impose upon her in the days of the East India Company. Sir Charles Trevelyan is able to speak on this subject with an authority possessed probably by no other man, because after having been for many years in the service of the East India Company, he became Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, and subsequently occupied an important position in India, after the East India Company had been abolished. He therefore is practically acquainted with the two systems of governing India, and when he was Permanent Secretary of the Treasury, he was in the very department which is specially concerned with the adjustment of the financial relations between England and India. In order completely to substantiate the point on which I have been insisting, it will be only necessary to mention a few of the numerous instances in which England has unjustly thrown some pecuniary charge on India. Striking official evidence has been given in reference to the treatment of India in regard to the Red Sea Telegraph and the Alexandria and Malta Telegraph.

Although India was in no way responsible for the Abyssinian War, a considerable portion of the troops engaged in that war were paid for by her. When the Duke of Edinburgh visited India, the cost of the presents which he distributed was not only made a charge upon Indian revenues, but India was also made to pay the expenses of his travelling companions from England. When he visited Australia, what would the Australian people have thought if England had attempted to impose a similar charge upon them? Why we perfectly well know that we should not for one moment have even thought of doing such a thing. Is it wise, is it dignified for a great and wealthy country to practise extortions upon those who have no power to resist? It may of course be said, that these transactions only represent small items of charge. This is no palliation, but is rather an aggravation of our conduct. The smaller the sum the more contemptible does the affair appear. If a wealthy person does some act of paltry meanness, is a poorer person who suffers from the meanness likely to be better pleased because he is told that it was only a question of sixpence? I have no hesitation in saying that it is impossible to exaggerate the harm that these and similar transactions have done to our rule in India. Errors intrinsically of far greater importance have not produced a tithe part so much irritation and dissatisfaction. It must not, however, be supposed, that in speaking of the financial relations between England and India trifling amounts such as those to which reference has just been made are alone in question. When we consider the numerous extravagant and un-

remunerative undertakings which have been forced upon India by the pressure of the English commercial interest, and when we also consider the ruinous military charges which India has to bear in consequence of the policy adopted towards her by the War Office and the Horse Guards, it will soon be found that we are not dealing with unimportant items of a few thousand pounds, but that amounts are in question which are sufficient to produce no small part of the financial embarrassment under which during the last few years India has suffered. Upon the Godavery Navigation, a favourite scheme of the cotton interest in England, three quarters of a million has been spent with so little result that it has been officially reported that the works had better not be continued. The Orissa Irrigation Works were bought from an English Company at £450,000 beyond the value of the shares as quoted at the time. The Madras Irrigation Works, with an influential English directorate, obtained from the Secretary of State of the day a guarantee upon £1,600,000, and the scheme does not yield a shilling of profit. The Scinde, Punjaub and Delhi Railway was also constructed by an English Company. Five per cent. was guaranteed upon all the capital which has been spent and wasted. More than £8,000,000 have already been expended. The line only pays 12*s.* 6*d.* per cent., and there seems to be no prospect of its returns increasing. I will not weary the House with the repetition of instances of similar recklessness and prodigality. The promoters of these Companies are in the happy position of being able on a magnificent scale to play at the game of "heads I win, tails you

lose." Disastrous as these schemes have been to India, the gains of the shareholders are secured. In this day's money market you will see that the Madras Irrigation Works are at 4 premium, the Scinde, Punjaub and Delhi shares are at 8 premium. I will next describe, as briefly as the nature of the subject admits, the extent to which the military expenditure of India is increased by the War Office and the Horse Guards. There is not, I will venture to say, a single person who has taken any trouble to acquaint himself with the subject who will not agree in the opinion that the military expenditure of India has been most seriously increased by the amalgamation of the Indian with the British army. The amount of this increase is certainly not less than £1,000,000 a year; many competent judges estimate it at considerably more than £2,000,000 a year. Since 1862 the army has been diminished by 12,000 Europeans, and by 16,000 natives, and yet this smaller army costs about £1,500,000 more, after allowing for the transfer of certain charges, than the larger army in 1862. Two years since a blue-book was published containing correspondence between the government of Lord Mayo and the Secretary of State in reference to the military expenditure of India. This correspondence brings out with remarkable distinctness the all-important fact that the Secretary of State in all questions of Indian military expenditure is bound hand and foot by the Horse Guards and the War Office. Sir Henry Durand, whose untimely death inflicted irreparable loss upon India, addressed, as military member of the Viceroy's Council, to the Secretary of State, one of the ablest minutes that was

ever written. Sir Henry Durand, after pointing out in what way many large reductions might be made in military expenditure, demonstrates with the utmost clearness that these reductions might be effected without in the slightest degree diminishing the efficiency of the Indian army. He shews how desirable it is that the number of regiments should be reduced, that at the same time the numerical strength of the remainder should be increased. In this way he proves that there would be a great saving in the present enormous expenditure upon officers, whilst at the same time India would be able to bring as powerful an army into the field. Amongst other reductions, he advises a large saving in the Artillery, and he particularly insists on the fact that much unnecessary expenditure has been forced upon India simply by the dictum of the Horse Guards. This minute of Sir H. Durand cannot apparently be acted upon by the Secretary of State for India, but is communicated to the Horse Guards. The reception it there receives is most significant and noteworthy. Not the slightest notice is taken of many of Sir H. Durand's recommendations, and those to which the Horse Guards condescend to pay any attention are considered not from the Indian, but solely from the English point of view. Again and again does it appear that a particular proposal cannot be assented to, or a suggested economy cannot be sanctioned, not because it would not be a good thing for India, not because it would not effect an important diminution in expenditure, but because it would not suit the convenience of the military authorities in England, or because it would entail some

additional charge upon English estimates. At the present time 450 officers maintained by India have nothing whatever to do, and it is admitted that her army is over-officered, but the excuse made for this redundancy of officers is that it is an essential part of the English military system. Too much stress cannot be laid upon the fundamental distinction already pointed out between the financial position of the two countries. If England chooses to waste £1,000,000 a year in the employment of an unnecessary number of officers, her revenue is so prosperous and elastic that the waste is a matter of comparatively little consequence. A million, however, wasted in India may necessitate the imposition of some tax so objectionable (the income-tax was last year levied to get £500,000) that discontent may be produced from one end of that country to the other. Time prevents me referring at greater length to the correspondence, of which Sir H. Durand's minute forms a part. Every page of it should be carefully read by those who wish to know how difficult it is to make both ends meet in India. For instance, it throws an instructive light upon the establishment of the staff corps. It will be some day scarcely believed that a military corps should have existed which a man can enter after serving three years as a subaltern in the army. Having once entered it, he may be employed the rest of his life in civil work. Although he may never be occupied one single hour in military duties, he ultimately obtains the rank of Major-General, and secures a Colonel's allowance of £1,100 a year as a retiring pension. This civilian Major-General may suddenly be

called upon to discharge in the field the duties belonging to his military rank. It has been calculated that more than a million a year of the revenues of India is wasted by the system adopted in granting these pensions. About five years since, Lord Mayo and the highest military authorities in India, including Lord Sandhurst and General Norman, prepared a scheme for reducing the serious charge which the pensions in the Staff Corps entail. It was submitted to the present Secretary of State, only to be curtly and summarily rejected by him. There is one other branch of Indian military expenditure upon which I must say a few words, as it shews in a striking manner some of the radical defects in the present system of governing India. Secretaries of State, Governors-General, every authority at the India Office, every official in India, have been all alike impressed with the conviction that India is compelled by the English military authorities to pay a most excessive price for her recruits. It has been proved by the most conclusive evidence that if India could supply recruits for herself from England, she would obtain them at least at one-third less than the price she is now forced to pay. Remonstrance after remonstrance has been addressed to the Horse Guards and the War Office, with about as much effect as if blank sheets of paper had been sent to them. General Pears, the Military Secretary at the India Office, stated in his evidence that the last communication on the subject had been sent to the Horse Guards six months previously, but they had not even vouchsafed to return an answer. It cannot, however, be necessary to multiply instances. More than enough,

I am confident, has already been said to convince the House that the Secretary of State and his Council either cannot or will not protect the Indian Exchequer against demands which are improperly made upon it either by the English public or by the English Government. This being the case, the important question arises,—Can any remedies be suggested, and if so, what are they? Some have proposed that the Indian Council should be abolished. Certainly if it does no more in the future than it has done in the past, it will be difficult to justify its continuance. But there are many reasons which ought to make one pause before advocating the adoption of such a proposal. It is evident, after what has been stated, that it is very desirable if possible to strengthen the hands of the Secretary of State. The Council, if they fully used the power placed in their hands, could not only give the Secretary of State this additional power, but could compel him to see that justice was done to India, if he cared less about her interests than he did about the party interests of the Cabinet of which he is a member. After considering various suggestions that have been made for altering the present constitution of the Council, I have come to the conclusion that great advantage would result if the proceedings of the Council were made public. Not only the Council, but the Secretary of State and the Government of which he is a member, would be brought more directly under the influence of public opinion, and any neglect of duty would then be readily detected. The Council would also be encouraged to take more interest in their work. It now often happens that some of the most eminent mem-

bers of the Council object to something that is being done. They are overruled, and the only action they can take in the matter is to write elaborate protests, which long after the affair has been irrevocably settled are laid on the table of this House. Their opposition, however, might prove effectual if their objections could be known in time. Something is at this moment happening at the India Office which affords a striking example of the advantage which would result from publishing the proceedings of the Council. The Secretary of State is being eagerly pressed, by the same persons who had influence enough with the Government to secure the purchase of the Elphinstone Land Scheme at a ruinous price, to make a State railway from Curwar, at a cost of not less than £1,000,000. I believe I am perfectly correct when I state that this scheme is strongly objected to by several members of the Council, whose opinion is particularly entitled to respect. If the reasons for their opposition were published, and if at the same time certain particulars connected with the history of this railway project were made known to the House, I am confident that no Secretary of State in the present position of Indian finance would venture to give his sanction to the scheme. It may of course be said, that the publication of the proceedings of the Council would encourage this House to meddle too much with Indian administration. On the contrary, however, it may be urged that the interference of this House would be more systematized and placed on a more reasonable basis. Under the present system the interposition of this House in Indian affairs must necessarily be un-

certain and accidental. Sometimes we interfere when we have not the requisite knowledge to do so; more frequently things that are being done in connection with India escape the attention of this House, when a discussion would be of the utmost value. It can scarcely be denied that the intervention of this House would not only be justified, but would almost invariably be advantageous when anything is being done in reference to India which provokes strong protests from influential members of the Council. It will not improbably be said, "but Parliament has in the past often intervened not for the benefit of India." The questions which have been most frequently discussed in this House have been proposals to give some Indian prince a pension out of the revenues of India. This House has often shewn itself more solicitous to promote the interest of some classes of Englishmen than to protect the taxpayers of India. When the Bill for the amalgamation of the Indian and British armies was passing through Parliament, a clause was inserted in the interest of the British officers, which throws a heavy and unnecessary charge upon India. No one can be more ready fully to admit these shortcomings than I am. It is because I have been so much impressed with them that I have endeavoured to do what I can to point out the responsibility which we, as members of this House, owe to India. There is nothing more strongly impressed upon my mind than that if we continue in the future to be as negligent of this responsibility as we have been in the past, we shall some day incur the reproach of having brought upon our country one of the most serious

misfortunes from which she has ever suffered. Depend upon it, the conduct of the British Parliament will in no small degree decide the future of our empire in India.

I will now in conclusion briefly consider certain reforms of the present method of government which may be carried out in India itself. No one, so far as I am able to discover, is prepared to justify the present constitution of the Governments of Bombay and Madras. If the Punjaub, the North-West Provinces and Oude can be administered by Lieutenant-Governors or Commissioners, why should a different and more costly system be necessary in Bombay and Madras? The North-West Provinces are more than twice as populous as the Presidency of Bombay. The former has a population of 30,778,000, the latter of only 14,000,000. The Lieutenant-Governors are appointed by the Viceroy, and he invariably selects some distinguished Indian official. The Governors of Bombay and Madras are appointed by the Secretary of State, and the selections which he makes often afford additional proof that the Secretary of State is primarily a member of an English Government, and only secondarily the minister for India. He not unfrequently selects men for political reasons. Sometimes a place has to be found for a troublesome and unpopular ally, sometimes a man who has been faithful to his party has to be provided for. Sometimes social and other claims have to be considered. And thus has it often happened that men have been appointed to the Governorships of Bombay and Madras who, as far as the world knows, have never given one hour's attention to

Indian affairs. These Governors are supposed to hold a higher position than the Lieutenant-Governors. They receive much higher salaries, and are surrounded with expensive establishments. The Governor of Bombay has two palaces in Bombay, and a country house at Poonah, which was lately erected at a cost of £155,000, £20,000 more being spent in furnishing it. India has to pay £26,000 per annum for his personal establishment, £1,700 a year for his band, £1,200 a year for his state barge. It is as inconceivable that a Lieutenant-Governor would be permitted to launch out into such extravagance, as it is that this House would pay £1,700 a year in providing a band for the Prime Minister. This kind of personal extravagance is however only a small part of the evil.

Because Bombay and Madras have each a Governor, it seems to be thought that they must each have an army with its Commander-in-Chief. Lord Sandhurst, Sir H. Durand, and a host of other high military authorities who might be quoted, have repeatedly declared that these separate armies greatly increase military expenditure, and they further assert that this additional charge is not only useless, but absolutely injurious. The greatest evil, however, resulting from the present constitution of the Governments of Bombay and Madras is due to a circumstance to which allusion has already been made. From the fact that the Governors are appointed by the Secretary of State and not by the Viceroy, they are to a certain extent independent of the Viceroy. If he disapproves of any of their proceedings, they immediately put themselves into communication with the Secretary of State, who

very possibly may be a former political colleague. There thus arises an *imperium in imperio*, under which, as has been stated, it is impossible to exercise efficient control. More than one official witness, on being questioned upon the unprecedented extravagance which has characterized the government of Bombay, significantly said, "the Governor took the bit into his mouth and no power could get it out again." One example, however, will perhaps more forcibly impress the House than any amount of general description. The circumstances I am about to describe happened under the Viceroyalty of Lord Lawrence, and he testified to the accuracy of the following narrative. In 1865 the Governor of Bombay, without obtaining the consent of the Viceroy, sold a country house at Poonah for £35,000. Upon being censured for this act of insubordination by the Viceroy, he pleaded in excuse that the bargain was so good that he should be able to build a new and much better house with the money for which the old one was sold. Consent accordingly was given to the building of the house on the understanding that it was not to cost more than this £35,000. Eighteen months elapse, and the Viceroy discovers that not £35,000 but £90,000 has been spent, and the house is not nearly completed. He then once more with redoubled severity censures the Governor of Bombay, and orders him at once to furnish an estimate of the amount required to complete the building. Instead of furnishing this estimate, the Governor puts himself into communication with the Secretary of State, and before the Viceroy obtains the estimate another £60,000 has been spent. A

house, upon which only £35,000 was to be expended, costs £155,000, and in order aptly to complete this narrative of prodigality and insubordination, £20,000 is ultimately given to the Governor to furnish the house[1]. Is not a system of Government under which such things are possible conclusively condemned? If time permitted me I believe it would be easy to shew by a simple statistical statement, that if Bombay and Madras had been in recent years administered as economically as the Punjaub and Oudh, the income-tax need not have been imposed, the decentralization scheme would never have been heard of, and the present local taxation difficulty would scarcely have been known.

It is of course scarcely necessary to say that in considering how the Government can be reformed, no question should occupy a more prominent position than the admission of the people of India to a larger and more direct share in the Government of their country. More natives ought to be placed on the Council of the Viceroy in order to give it a more representative character. At the present time only three natives are on the Council, and only one of these is a British subject. He has

[1] On being appealed to, in the House, to name the Governor of Bombay under whom this transaction took place, I stated that it was Sir Bartle Frere. Sir Bartle Frere in a letter he subsequently addressed to me disclaimed the responsibility, and wished me to withdraw the statement I had previously made. I had an opportunity two days afterwards of stating in the House that on referring to Lord Lawrence's evidence I found that I had accurately described every fact connected with the building of this country-house, but that the transaction took place partly under the Governorship of Sir Bartle Frere and partly under that of his successor, Sir Seymour Fitzgerald. I therefore at once expressed my regret that I had done Sir Bartle Frere an injustice in not associating Sir Seymour Fitzgerald's name with his.

only been on the Council a few months, and previously no native British subject had a seat on the Council. It is moreover admitted in an official report just issued that there is no one on the Council to represent the wishes and the wants of the poorer classes, who form the vast majority of the population. The establishment of local Consultative Councils has been earnestly recommended by Sir D. Macleod and many of the ablest of Indian statesmen. The rapid spread of local taxation makes it of vital importance that there should be no delay in the creation of these Consultative Councils. Unfortunately the people now believe, and they have certainly valid reasons for the belief, that the policy which is now being pursued towards them is intended not to afford greater but less facilities for taking part in the government of their country. The establishment of the Engineering College at Cooper's Hill will render it more hopeless than ever for the natives to obtain employment as Government engineers. A few years ago some scholarships were established which enabled natives to come to England to compete in the Indian Civil Service. These scholarships were abolished on the plea that a certain number of natives would be admitted direct to the covenanted service. The scholarships were abolished four years ago, and the promise to admit natives to the Civil Service still remains a dead letter. The rules under which they were to be admitted have not yet even been promulgated. Remember these things are done in face of the solemn pledge given by the English nation, that all subjects of the Queen should be freely and impartially admitted to offices under the

Government. Can we be surprised that there is discontent in India? May we not rather be thankful that there is not something worse? A native may possess an amount of administrative ability which, if possessed by an Englishman, would secure him the highest position in the State. But for such a one there is no place in the government of his country. Sir Mádhava Ráo administered Travancore with so much skill as justly to entitle him to be considered the Turgot of India. One of the official reports on his administration says, "He found Travancore when he went there in 1849 in the lowest stage of degradation. He has left it a model state." The *Times* Calcutta correspondent in the *Times* of November 11th, 1872, says: "When he went there everything was in disorder. The Treasury was in a state almost beyond description; the law-courts an utter sham; the police, what police always will be when they are allowed to exercise unrestrained power and earn their own pay apart from their employers. All this was transformed by the man who has been invited to take office under Holkar. He made the law strong, the police orderly and efficient, brought the revenues into order, and was soon able to undertake public works, to start and support great educational schemes, and, in short, to leave a model state. This is the kind of man for whom we have no proper opening—at a time when our resources are declared to be inelastic, and when if the opium revenue failed us we should not know where to turn for the amount required." Sir Mádhava Ráo cleared off an onerous debt, abolished many vexatious taxes, raised the pay of the public servants to "secure

honesty," spent large sums on education and public works, and placed the revenues of Travancore in such a position that there is now each year a considerable surplus. "All this was done by good State housewifery, by pure management," the management, however, of financial genius and high statesmanship, and moreover without adding a penny to taxation. The *Times*, in referring to this account of Sir Mádhava Ráo, makes the following most suggestive remarks: "The notion of employing a native financier to aid in the work of raising a revenue from native tax-payers seems to us completely in accord with common sense. Sir Mádhava Ráo, we are told, managed things adroitly, and accomplished his ends rather by good homely State housewifery than by any dazzling stroke of finance. We confess we regard this description as about the highest compliment that could be paid. There is not a householder in this kingdom who does not know, or who is not quickly taught, the difference between 'management' and 'muddle.' It is felt in a thousand ways, and produces effects out of all proportion to anticipation. We cannot but fear that it is sensibly experienced in the financial administration of India." It is then further remarked: "Notwithstanding the determined and ingenious defence made by the Department in London whenever adverse criticism is heard in the House of Commons, we cannot bring ourselves to feel confidence in the Budgets of our successive Ministers at Calcutta. We will go further, and say, that men not at all given to timidity look upon the financial position of India with anxiety, and, though fully admitting the wealth of the country

and its capacity to yield large yearly sums to Government, they believe that taxation is not only becoming inordinately heavy, but that it is not imposed according to the wisest methods. It is true that Indian deficits are, speaking relatively, of no extravagant amount, and that the Public Debt of the Empire is not of any alarming magnitude. But there remains the unwelcome fact that we are straining ourselves in a time of peace, and that no further resource has been suggested by our statesmen beyond a tax which, even when kept down to an insignificant amount, has proved a cause of irritation and misgiving throughout the country. We send out men of great general ability, but not always skilled in the department of finance. Even when they possess this special knowledge it is in connexion with European systems, and does not insure any real skill in raising Asiatic revenues. It is in accordance with what might be expected, that a native financier, conversant with the habits of his countrymen, should be able to increase a revenue without pressing intolerably on the taxpayer." I cannot, I think, do better than bring what I fear has been far too long a speech to a close by asking the House carefully to reflect upon the remarks which I have just quoted. They seem to me with admirable force and brevity not only to describe our present financial position in India, but to indicate the causes of our embarrassment, and what should in future be the policy of our financial administration. India has suffered from carelessness, mismanagement, and extravagance. She requires the frugality and the attention to small details which characterise a well-ordered

household. The most admirably devised laws, the most skilled systems of jurisprudence will be of little avail if the gulf between the rulers and the ruled is permitted to widen. Not only must we secure the sympathy of the people in order to obtain contentment, but until they become partners with us in the Government of their country, we shall never become sufficiently acquainted with their habits, their wishes, and their wants, to enable us to justify the continuance of our empire in the East by proving that it promotes the happiness and the moral and material advancement of the people. It now only remains for me to tender to Honourable Members my sincere thanks for the patience with which they have listened to me. I fear I have been far too long, and yet I know that only a small portion of what ought to be said has been said. I may have spoken warmly, but I have not said a single word which I do not feel, and the House, I trust, will believe that I am prompted by no other motive than to endeavour to induce the English Parliament and the English nation to give a due amount of consideration to the wants of a vast population, the mass of whom, after a century of England's rule, are, to quote the memorable words of Lord Lawrence, "so miserably poor that they have barely the means of subsistence[1]."

[1] At the conclusion of this speech Mr McCullagh Torrens moved the adjournment of the debate. The Government arranged that the debate should be resumed at the morning sitting on the next day, Friday, Aug. 1; but as other business was put before it, the debate did not commence till 4·30 p.m. and was again adjourned, as the sitting had to be suspended at 7 p.m. The most unusual course was then adopted of resuming the debate at a morning sitting on Saturday. Difficult as it

always is to obtain the attendance of members three days before a prorogation, it is much more difficult on a Saturday than on any other day. During the three hours that the debate lasted on Saturday, there were at no time 20 members in the House. Under these circumstances the Resolution was withdrawn. Even if it had been decided to divide upon it, it is more than probable that no division could have been taken; for by the rules of the House if there are less than 40 members in a division, the sitting is at once suspended and the division becomes null and void.

THE BIRMINGHAM LEAGUE AND THE EDUCATION ACT[1].

I so entirely agree with all the arguments which have been advanced in this debate in favour of general compulsory education, by my honourable friend the member for Birmingham (Mr Dixon), that it will not be necessary for me to occupy any time by referring to this part of the subject, except that I shall by and bye offer a suggestion which I believe would, if adopted, help on that general system of compulsory education which Mr Dixon and his friends have so much at heart. My chief reason for asking the attention of the House for a short time is that, as I was one of the earliest members of the Birmingham League, and as many arguments have been put for-

[1] This Speech was made, Thursday, July 17, 1873, in support of the Second reading of the Elementary Education Act Amendment Bill. The two main provisions of the Bill as originally introduced by the Government were:—1st, That Poor Law Guardians should pay the fees of indigent children instead of School Boards, but that this payment should not be considered parochial relief; 2ndly, it was provided that Denison's Act, which allowed Poor Law Guardians to enforce school attendance upon those children whose parents were in receipt of out-door relief, should be made obligatory instead of permissive. At the commencement of the debate on the Second Reading, the Vice-President of the Council (Mr Forster) on behalf of the Government announced that the first of these two proposals had been abandoned.

ward this evening in the name of that body with which I do not agree, I am not unnaturally desirous to explain the cause of this difference of opinion. I am the more anxious to do so because I believe that during the ensuing winter-months a sectarian agitation will be got up that will subject many hon. Members to pledges which, if fulfilled, will prove most mischievous to the cause of education. I was certainly not in favour of the Bill of the Government as originally introduced, and I am perfectly prepared to vote now, as I have voted before, in favour of the repeal of the 25th clause; but I objected to the Bill of the Government as originally introduced, for reasons very different from those which have been put forward by Mr Dixon. In the first place, it may be well to ask, what is the cause of the Government being placed in the not very dignified position which they occupy this evening? Having for months had the problem before them, how to deal with the vexed question of the 25th clause, they proposed a solution of it so unsatisfactory to the country that they have been obliged to abandon it before the debate on the Second Reading of the Bill commenced. It is not difficult to understand how the Government have placed themselves in their present position. It is the old story: they had not the courage of their opinions, they were afraid to call a spade a spade. Why did their proposal in reference to the 25th clause meet with no support? Simply because they adopted an unfortunate middle course, for which there was no justification, no defence. After having proposed to associate parochial relief with education, they inserted words in their Bill which declared that

the parochial relief it was intended to give was not parochial relief. Was ever a more absurd course adopted than to say that the Poor Law Guardians should defray the cost of the children's education, and yet that the parents should not be supposed to be receiving parochial relief, but some gratuity in the shape of a bounty or reward? If the strict system under which the Poor Law is administered were gradually to be relaxed, the country would soon be deluged with pauperism. If payment for the education of a man's children is not to be regarded as parochial relief, why should the payment for necessaries supplied to his sick wife or children be regarded as parochial relief? The Vice-President of the Council (Mr Forster)—in fact every member of the Government—must be well aware that there is not a single logical argument in favour of calling payment for the education of a man's children by any other name than parochial relief, and the country would soon come to the conclusion that what was in fact poor relief should be designated by that term. I have had an opportunity of consulting some of the most active members of the London School Board in reference to the payment of the fees of poor children, and they seem to be unanimously of opinion that the Poor Law Guardians are much better judges of whether the fees of any particular children ought to be paid than the members of a School Board possibly can be. It is peculiarly within the province of Poor Law Guardians to inquire into the circumstances of parents who may be applicants for relief. Nothing can be more unfortunate than to have two conflicting authorities to

do the same kind of work. The utmost confusion would be created, and a severe blow would be struck at administrative efficiency, if, for instance, on the very day the Guardians came to the conclusion that a man was not entitled to receive relief, the School Board should decide that he was so poor that it was necessary to pay the school-fees of his children. Can there be a more indisputable proof of destitution than that a man is so deplorably poor that he cannot pay twopence a week for his child's education? If therefore the Government had acted logically, if, in transferring the payment of the school-fees of poor children from the School Boards to the Guardians, they had been prepared to declare that the payment of these fees should be regarded as parochial relief, depend upon it many would have come forward and warmly supported the Government Bill who have now met it with silent indifference or with active hostility. The advocates of compulsory education cannot pursue a more inconsistent course, or one more likely indefinitely to defer the end they have in view, than to encourage a belief amongst the people that there is a fundamental difference between the relief given from rates on behalf of education, and relief given from rates to provide food, clothing, medical attendance, or other necessaries. It cannot be too carefully borne in mind, that unless we are prepared to regard education as a necessary which the parent is as much bound to give to his children as he is to provide them with food and clothing, every argument in favour of compulsory education at once falls to the ground. How is it possible to justify the interference of the

State with the parent unless we are prepared to maintain that the parent is bound to provide education for his children, and if he neglects to do so, the State has a right to interfere on behalf of the children? It often has struck me as being singularly anomalous to hear many of the most ardent advocates of compulsory education object to the payment of school-fees being considered parochial relief. They say it puts the stigma of pauperism upon those parents who receive this assistance, but is there any one upon whom the so-called stigma of pauperism can be more legitimately placed than upon those parents who cannot, or will not, pay a few pence a week for their children's education? Remember, in the case of illness this stigma is placed upon those who cannot provide medical attendance for themselves or their families. With regard to the 25th clause, I have on a previous occasion stated that my objections to it are very different from those put forward in the name of the Birmingham League. I object to it chiefly on economic grounds. In the first place, I believe that the members of a School Board are not the best persons to judge whether the circumstances of any particular parent are such as to entitle him to have the education of his children paid for entirely out of the rates; and, secondly, I believe that as those children whose fees are remitted can be sent to denominational schools, it may in some cases happen that denominational zeal would induce School Boards to pay the fees of children whose parents can perfectly well afford to pay the fees themselves. That this may occur is proved by the fact of the alarming extent

to which school-fees have been remitted in Manchester, whereas in other towns, where the people are not at all better off than in Manchester, there has been scarcely any remission of fees at all. Such economical considerations as these suggest, I venture to think, much more serious arguments against the 25th clause than the religious objections which are so persistently urged against it by the Nonconformists and the Birmingham League. When the Birmingham League was first constituted I held a very decided opinion that if it concerned itself at all with what is known as the religious difficulty, it had better at once accept the programme of secular education. No two persons agree as to what is meant by unsectarian religious instruction, and it is impossible in an Act of Parliament to define either it, or what is sometimes called undogmatic religion. Nothing can be more absurd or indefensible than that wretched compromise formerly accepted by the League, that the Bible should be read without note or comment. Such a proposal was certain to alienate those who were in favour of secular teaching, and was certain not to conciliate those who wished that with secular teaching there should be associated religious or sectarian instruction. So far as my own individual opinions are concerned, I am as much in favour as any one can be both of secular education and of religious equality, but as a practical politician I am bound to consider existing facts, and to remember that in the matter of education we are not starting *de novo*. If this was the first time that the State was going to concern itself with education, if we were now for the first time going to devote public

money to the erection and maintenance of schools, we might do many things which I believe, under existing circumstances, it is impossible to do. Nothing appears to me to be more certain than that the country will never consent to the property at present embarked in voluntary denominational schools being thrown away. Nonconformists and others, who, like myself, now avow ourselves to be in favour of a general system of secular education, are bound in common fairness to remember that we are partly responsible for calling into existence the present voluntary denominational schools. Year after year large grants of public money have been given to these schools, and when the Education Vote has been proposed, it has either been supported or tacitly assented to; by many who now make the loudest protestations about the offence which is offered to their conscience, if a few shillings are given from the rates to pay the fees of some poor children who are attending a denominational school. For the life of me, I cannot understand why a man's conscience is not offended if money raised from imperial taxes is given to denominational schools, whilst at the same time he is grievously offended if one single penny which has been obtained from rates is expended in denominational education! If the tax-collector comes and collects £5 in the form of inhabited house duty, no objection is made if a portion of the money is given to some denominational school; when, however, the rate-collector comes an hour afterwards, and collects £5 in the same house from the same individual in the form of rates, language cannot be found strong enough to describe the wrong which is done

to the conscience of the householder if a single penny of this latter sum should find its way to a denominational school. Was there ever a more untenable position taken up by a great and powerful party? It is moreover easy to shew that many of those who urge conscientious objections to the 25th clause are more responsible than any one else for levying forced contributions from others in support of some of their own denominational institutions. In the debate the other night on the Rating Bill, it was demonstrated by the Prime Minister, in a most masterly and convincing speech, that if you exempt some people or some kind of property from rates you compulsorily levy additional rates from other people and from other kinds of property. Who at the present time are the most powerful and influential advocates of maintaining the existing exemption from rates of Ragged schools, Sunday schools, and churches and chapels? Why we all know that one chief reason why these exemptions cannot be abolished is that if such a thing were proposed, the Nonconformists from one end of the country to the other would be united as one man to resist it. The Government in their Rating Bill, which is now before the House, proposed to abolish the privilege which Sunday and Ragged schools now enjoy of being exempted from rates; but they became so alarmed at what they had done—in fact they were so appalled at the hostility aroused not only in Church, but also in Dissenting congregations,—that they not only abandoned their proposal, but, in order to prove that their repentance was complete, they actually went into the lobby and voted against this particular part

of their own bill. During a portion of each year I reside in Cambridge. Not long since a considerable amount of property in that town which paid a large amount to the rates was pulled down, and on the site a handsome Dissenting chapel has been erected, the foundation stone of which was laid by the hon. member for Bristol (Mr S. Morley). As the chapel will not pay a single penny to the rates, my own rates and the rates of every other ratepayer in the town will be *pro tanto* increased by the erection of this chapel. Although I am a very moderate Churchman I object to being forced in this way to give a yearly subscription to a Dissenting chapel. But if as a moderate Churchman I object to such a proceeding, what must be the feelings of more ardent Churchmen, such, for instance, as the Prime Minister, or the hon. member for North Warwickshire (Mr Newdigate)? I believe that hon. gentleman is at the present moment compelled, in the way I have pointed out, to contribute to many a Catholic chapel, and to many a convent school. Are those who conscientiously object to pay the smallest modicum to denominational education prepared to be consistent? Well if they are, I will give them an opportunity of proving their consistency; for when the Rating Bill is next in Committee, I will, if I receive any encouragement, propose to abolish the exemption from rates which is now enjoyed by Sunday schools, Ragged schools, chapels, and churches. If such a proposal were brought forward we all know the kind of reception it would meet with in this House. It is doubtful whether ten members would be found to support it. I am very anxious not in any way

to misapprehend the reasons which induce so many, whose sincerity no one can doubt, to object on conscientious grounds to the payment of fees of poor children in denominational schools. They say that it would be more in accordance with religious equality, if all those children whose fees were remitted were compelled to attend a Board school. I do not wish to deny this as an abstract proposition, but whatever theoretical arguments may be advanced in favour of the adoption of such a course, it seems to me that there are three unanswerable arguments against compelling these children to attend Board schools. In the first place, the voluntary denominational school is often much nearer the child's home than the Board school which he would be compelled to attend. As far as my own individual opinion is concerned, I would far sooner that the child were attending the Board school. But this is a case in which something more than our own individual opinions must be considered. We are bound at any rate to take some notice of what is most convenient for the child. When there is a denominational school within a stone's throw of the child's home, is it not perfectly monstrous that an ill-clad child should be compelled in all weathers, in snow and in rain, to walk two or three miles to a Board school, in order that effect may be given to the conscientious scruples of sensitive ratepayers? Secondly, if children are driven into Board schools, it will of course be necessary to increase the accommodation provided by these schools, and a considerable additional charge will as a consequence be thrown upon the rates. The ratepayers, in their

present state of susceptibility, would object to this. They would regard it as an indefensible waste of their money to be compelled to provide additional school accommodation out of the rates because certain people disapproved of children being sent to voluntary schools already in existence; the parents, be it remembered, preferring these voluntary schools to the Board schools. Thirdly, it seems to me that we are bound to consider the subject from an educational point of view, rather than as a question affecting the consciences of rate-payers and parents. Those who are in favour of general compulsion must be aware that under any circumstances it will be hard enough to carry out a system of general compulsion, and I believe that the difficulty will become insurmountable if the opponents of compulsory education are armed with the plausible argument that children are forced into schools to which their parents have conscientious objections. It is shewn by the experience of every country that has a system of national education, that under such circumstances compulsion will not work.

With regard to the question whether or not the Second reading of the bill ought to be supported, I certainly cannot follow the example of Mr Dixon, who has stated that when the division is called he shall walk out of the House. If the bill is a bad bill, we ought to oppose it. If, on the other hand, the bill is a good one, we ought to support it regardless of the interpretation that may be put upon our votes by the constituencies. No one can pretend to deny that the bill will fail to remedy many of the defects in the Elementary Education Act which most need amendment. It

leaves the 25th clause untouched, and it does little to carry out the promise given last year by Mr Forster on behalf of the Government, that the absurdity known as permissive compulsion should cease, and that the attendance of all children at school should, as far possible, be secured. The greatest defect in the Elementary Education Act was that it did scarcely any thing at all for the education of the rural districts, and this amending bill does not even pretend to do any thing for the rural districts. Fully admitting all these shortcomings, we still have to ask ourselves whether this bill, small as its proportions may be, will do good so far as it goes. It certainly seems to me that there cannot be much hesitation in the answer to be given to this question, and, acting on the old adage that half a loaf is better than no bread, I shall certainly vote for the Second reading of the bill. I could not have done so if the provision had been retained, that money given by Guardians to pay the school-fees of children should not be considered parochial relief. It appears to me, however, that nothing but good will result from enacting, as this bill will do, that parents who are in receipt of out-door relief shall be compelled to send their children to school. We have been told on good authority that this will secure the attendance at school of 200,000 additional children. This will be a great direct gain, and I shall presently endeavour to shew that scarcely less importance is to be attributed to the indirect consequences which will result from the measure. My hon. friend the member for Finsbury (Mr McCullagh Torrens), in a very able speech, has asked us to reject the bill by moving the

previous question. No one who listened to his speech, as well as to the speech of the hon. baronet, the member for South Devon (Sir Massey Lopes), who seconded him, can fail to perceive what is at the bottom of their opposition. They are no doubt both as anxious as any one in this House to see these pauper children educated, but, being zealous guardians of the ratepayers' interests, they say:—"Do not let the education of these pauper children be paid for out of the rates; let it be paid for out of imperial funds." I have often had occasion to protest against these persistent attempts to transfer charges from local to imperial funds. It has been urged by those who oppose this bill that it would have a tendency to increase out-door relief, but would not infinitely greater encouragement be given to out-door relief if local authorities were permitted to draw from that inexhaustible mine of wealth, the Consolidated Fund? Where then should we look for any guarantees for economy? Differing *in toto* from what has been said on the subject by Mr McCullagh Torrens, I believe that this bill, far from encouraging out-door relief, would exercise a not unimportant influence in discouraging it. Many an applicant would probably relinquish his intention of applying for out-door relief if he knew that his children must be sent to school as a condition of his receiving that relief. The lavishness with which out-door relief is administered is responsible for no small part of our existing pauperism, and therefore I can but welcome anything which may make this relief appear to be less acceptable than it was before. Mr Torrens has in forcible language described the hardships which he

believes this bill might inflict on the poor in London. He spoke, however, as if it would introduce compulsion for the first time, but in London and in other towns where compulsion had been adopted, every one of the children affected by this bill ought by law to be already at school. The bill, therefore, in such places would not introduce a new principle, but would simply give an additional security for the carrying out of compulsion, for it would make the Poor Law Guardians as well as the School Boards responsible for the education of pauper children. In those districts where compulsory education has not yet been adopted, I entirely agree with Sir Massey Lopes that the thin end of the wedge will be introduced by this bill, but this is the chief reason which induces me to support it. The wedge will indeed be so effectually introduced that it will be our own fault if we do not drive it home, for this measure will take us so far that we must inevitably go farther. Acknowledging, as we are all prepared to do, that education is a great blessing to children, we cannot surely be content to see a system continued which would secure this blessing to those who happen to be paupers, but would not secure it to those children whose parents have never received parochial relief. Why, under such a state of things, a child would actually have to be congratulated on the fact that his father was a pauper!

In conclusion, I will only say that I believe the present agitation of the Birmingham League will involve the country in a miserable sectarian squabble which certainly will not promote the intellectual development of any adult or of any child. If the mem-

bers of the League would concentrate their efforts in trying to obtain the first object of the League, viz. general compulsion, and spend the winter months in promoting it instead of provoking sectarian wrangles, then there will probably be next year a much stronger feeling in favour of compulsion, and there will also be a much greater chance of obtaining it from the Government, than there will be if the League persists in its present policy. I am quite aware that the opinions which I have this evening expressed may very probably involve me in a considerable amount of unpopularity, but I started political life caring more about the general education of the people than about any other question that is likely to be discussed in this House. I have seen no reason to change my opinion, and I therefore should be pursuing an unworthy course, if, from the fear of incurring a certain amount of unpopularity, I remained silent when I believe there is a considerable amount of danger that the great end which we must all have in view, viz. the general education of the people of this country, may be lost sight of by being enveloped in the mists of a sectarian squabble.

THE NINE HOURS BILL[1].

It will be in the recollection of the House that at the close of the long speech with which my honourable friend the member for Sheffield (Mr Mundella) introduced the Second reading of this bill, not more than about five minutes remained before the debate, by the rules of the House, had to be suspended. It was only possible for me during these few brief minutes to protest against some aspersions which had, I thought, been unjustly cast upon the character of those employers who are opposed to this measure, and to indicate in very general terms the reasons which have induced me to meet the Second reading of the bill with the amendment of which I have given notice.

In order to present as clear an issue as possible to the House, I am desirous at the outset to state that the bill may be divided into two entirely distinct portions. One part of the bill asks us to legislate for children; by another part of the bill it is intended

[1] This Speech was made on July 30, 1873, in moving the following resolution in opposition to the Second reading of Mr Mundella's Factory Acts Amendment Bill:—"That in the opinion of this House it is undesirable to sanction a measure which would discourage the employment of women by subjecting their labour to a new legislative restriction to which it is not proposed to subject the labour of men."

both directly and indirectly to subject the labour of adults to certain new legislative restrictions. So far as the bill affects the employment of children, I have not a single word to say in opposition to it. On the contrary, no one would more cordially welcome proposals to raise the age at which children should be permitted to commence working, to extend the period of half-time, and to provide additional securities for the more efficient education of children when employed as half-timers.

So far as we are able to judge from the opinions which have been expressed by employers in reference to the employment and education of children, it would appear that the portion of the bill which refers to children might be passed with the general approval of the House. It is important to bear this in mind in order to obtain a distinct idea of the real points at issue between the supporters and the opponents of the bill. It has been attempted to make the country believe that many of the employers are anxious to have children overworked, and are perfectly indifferent to their education.

Probably there is no one in this House who is pecuniarily less interested in industrial undertakings than I am. I have not a shilling embarked in any one of the trades which would be affected by this bill. This has been one reason which has induced me to assume the responsibility of opposing the bill. If the amendment of which I have given notice had been moved by some employer, interested motives would not improbably have been attributed to him, and perhaps he would have been accused of being more soli-

citous for his own gains than for the welfare of his work-people. As it may be difficult for many of the employers to defend themselves without being charged with self-laudation, I feel bound in common fairness to say that many of those who are most prominent in opposing this bill are acknowledged to be among the best employers in the country. It has been admitted that there is no one in Lancashire who is more respected by those whom he employs for his great generosity and his judicious kindness than Mr Hugh Mason, and there is no one who has written and spoken with greater ability and force against the proposals in this bill to subject the labour of adults to legislative restrictions. Many members of this House who hold opinions similar to those of Mr Hugh Mason are as much esteemed as employers as he is.

Having made these few remarks in defence of those who in the course of the agitation which this measure is likely to excite will doubtless be subjected to many unjust insinuations, I will at once ask the House to consider the vitally important issues which are raised by this bill so far as it will affect the labour of adults.

It can, I think, be proved beyond dispute that this measure must operate in one of two ways. It will either be a Nine Hours Bill for men as well as for women, or it will place the labour of women under such serious disadvantages as greatly to restrict their employment. If the bill is intended to be a general nine hours bill, then the House has not been fairly dealt with; for why do not the promoters of the measure boldly come forward and tell us what they want? If they want this House to decide how long

the artisans of this country shall be permitted to work, let them at least have the courage to tell us at what they are aiming. Do not let them cloak their intentions in the garb of a generous zeal for the welfare of women.

I am perfectly ready to admit that Mr Mundella has emphatically denied that this is a general Nine Hours Bill. He has told us that nothing would induce him to have anything to do with a bill which would impose legislative restrictions upon the labour of men. But there may be the widest possible difference between what the promoter of an Act of Parliament wishes to be its consequences and what its actual consequences may ultimately be. Mr Mundella may not intend this to be a general Nine Hours Bill, but it may become one in spite of anything that he may say or wish to the contrary. But if it is not, as he asserts, a general Nine Hours Bill, then it can at once be proved that the bill must most seriously interfere with the employment of women. The labour of men and women is so inextricably intertwined in the various manufacturing processes, that it seems nothing can be more absurd than to suppose that the women, after working nine hours, should be compelled by law to leave the factory, and then the men should go on for another hour working without them. It is therefore absolutely certain that if women are not permitted to work more than nine hours a day, one of two things will occur:—either the manufacturers will be unable to employ their men for more than nine hours a day; or, if they wished to keep their machinery working for a longer period than this, they would only be able to do so by dis-

pensing with the labour of women altogether, or by employing them in double shifts like half-time children. It can only be proved by experience which of these results will ensue.

In those branches of industry in which the labour of women is indispensable—and I believe this is the case with the great majority of industries affected by this bill—it is evident that if we impose certain legislative restrictions upon the labour of women, we virtually impose the same restrictions upon the labour of men. In some branches of industry, however, in which the women form a very small minority of the entire number who are employed, this bill would probably have the effect of causing the labour of women to be altogether dispensed with, or of reducing them to the position of half-timers. The question, therefore, which the House has to determine is this: Are we, in the first place, prepared for some of the most important trades in the country to enact a general nine hours law? Or, are we prepared with regard to other trades to discourage and prohibit the employment of women? We probably have never been asked to give a decision upon issues of greater importance. Let me begin with the first.

I am perfectly well aware of the prejudice which will be industriously excited against those who oppose such legislation as is now contemplated. It therefore becomes of greater consequence that we should make the grounds of our opposition as intelligible as possible. I therefore desire in the first instance to affirm that this House has no right to interfere with the labour of adults; and secondly, if it had the right,

it would be singularly impolitic to exercise it at the present time. If we once accept the principle that grown-up persons cannot determine for themselves the number of hours which they shall work, we virtually treat them as if they were helpless children who find it so impossible to get on without our control and guidance, that we shall soon have to regulate their wages. And when are we asked to start on this career of paternal legislature? When are we asked to wrap the artisan population of this country in the swaddling-clothes of babyhood? Why at the very time when our working classes are proving, in a thousand hard-fought industrial contests between themselves and their employers, that they have not only the will but the power to protect their own interests. But even if the State had the right to decide how many hours a day a grown-up person should work, I confidently appeal to the House, whether it would not be impolitic to exercise this right. My chief contention is this: that the working classes can settle such a question as this far better for themselves than the State can settle it for them. No one now would think of invoking the aid of Parliament to determine the amount of remuneration which our artisans should receive for their labour, and if they can regulate the amount of their wages, why in the name of common sense cannot they also arrange the number of hours which they shall work? Not only have they the power to decide for themselves what shall be the length of the day's work, but I believe they will decide it far better without than with the assistance of this House. Employers and employed know the

peculiar circumstances of each branch of industry infinitely better than they can be known by this House. Employers and employed if left to themselves can make such arrangements as are most fitted for each special trade. Occasionally it may happen that it is desirable to work somewhat longer than the ordinary time. The employed recognize the truth of this just as much as do the employers; for it is particularly to be noted that in those trades where the employed have been most successful in shortening the hours of labour, they have always suggested certain arrangements for occasionally working over-time. Arrangements for controlling trade which are voluntarily made between employer and employed have not the rigidity and unchangeableness of a legislative enactment. They possess sufficient elasticity to be adapted to the peculiar circumstances of each special case; but this bill, on the contrary, proposes to lay down one uniform rule for a great variety of industrial processes which often differ widely in the character and quality of the work they require. If we pass this bill, it will be decreed by an inflexible rule that in the most important trades in the country no woman shall under any circumstances whatever work for more than a certain prescribed number of hours.

It has been said, and it will no doubt be often repeated, that it is now too late to raise objections to Parliamentary interference with the labour of adults; such interference was sanctioned by the Factory Acts, and no one would now think of repealing them. As I have before remarked, so far as these acts refer to the labour of those who are not adults, not only do

I not wish to repeal them, but I should be perfectly willing to strengthen them and to attempt to render them more efficient. But legislative interference with the employment of adults cannot at the present time be regarded in precisely the same light as it was when the Factory Acts were passed a quarter of a century since. The trade of the country has now to contend with many difficulties which were then scarcely foreseen. I shall presently refer to the serious effects which may be produced upon the industrial future of our country by the rise in the price of coal. Again, if the existing Factory Acts are to be quoted as a conclusive argument in favour of this bill, the same kind of reasoning would justify an eight, nay, even a seven hours bill.

Lastly, it may be asked, what becomes of the great progress in the people's condition which was quoted as an unanswerable argument in favour of their political enfranchisement, if they require the protection of the State just as much now as they did twenty-five years since? Those, I think, do a very serious injury to the working classes who are perpetually encouraging them to ask the State to do what they could far more effectually do for themselves.

It has lately been shewn how much more promptly and properly a matter is dealt with when the people take it into their own hands than when they rely upon Acts of Parliament. It will be in the recollection of the House that last year the Home Secretary introduced a bill with the view of putting down truck. Something like sixty Acts had already been passed with the same object, and we were told that in spite of

all this legislation truck was flourishing as vigorously as ever. Directly I read the bill of the Home Secretary, I determined to oppose it with an amendment which asserted the principle that all questions as to the time when and the manner in which wages should be paid, had better be settled by the employers and the employed rather than by Parliament. Many came to me then, as they have come to me now, and said: "We wonder that you are insensible to the evils of truck, and that you wish to see them perpetuated." I simply replied: "If I held such opinions as you attribute to me, I would do all in my power to promote the passing of the Home Secretary's bill, because experience has shewn that innumerable Truck Acts may be passed, and truck will continue to exist until those who are interested in its discontinuance take the subject into their own hands." It could scarcely have been foreseen that the truth of what has just been stated would be so soon proved. The bill happily not having passed, the Home Secretary was lately asked whether he intended to reintroduce it during the present session. What was his reply? It was so significant that I earnestly commend it to the particular attention of this House. After having stated that he did not intend to reintroduce the bill this year, he went on to confess that one of the chief reasons which had induced him to come to this decision was, that since his failure to legislate last year the working classes had to a great extent taken the matter into their own hands, and had by their own voluntary efforts abolished truck. If Parliament would only once declare that it would never have another Truck bill

introduced into this House, I believe that in five years all that is mischievous in connection with truck would have ceased to exist, just as in the same way do I believe, that if we would once declare that it was entirely beyond the province of this House to decide how many hours an adult should work, we should do far more to cause the day's work to be adjusted to such a length as would be most advantageous both to employers and employed, than will ever be done by such a bill as we are now asked to approve.

This is not simply a theoretical opinion, for it is to be particularly remarked that those trades in which the hours are at the present time the shortest are exactly those to which it has never been proposed to apply any legislative interference. In the nine hours struggle which commenced in Newcastle, and has been so successfully continued in other parts of the country, the aid of Parliament was never invoked. But Mr Mundella will probably rejoin: It is very well to leave men to take care of themselves. They are independent, they are free, they have the power to do what they think is best for themselves. But when we come to consider the case of women, what are they? Mr Mundella has told us that they are servants up to the age of 16 or 17: they then enjoy a year or two of independence; they then marry, and are henceforward the slaves of their masters[1].

[1] Mr Mundella, in a speech he subsequently made on the withdrawal of his bill, endeavoured to show that in using the expression "the slaves of their masters" he wished to imply that women were slaves of the employers not of their husbands. But if we are to accept this interpretation, why did he say that women enjoyed a year or two of independence between the period of childhood and marriage? An employer would not be less a

In the former debate some who are opposing this bill were taunted with being "cold-blooded economists." But we have never been so cold-blooded as to bring such an accusation against our fellow-countrymen. If this assertion were as correct as I believe it to be incorrect, instead of sending an expedition to Zanzibar to put down the slave trade, we ought to send an expedition to Lancashire and Yorkshire to emancipate our countrywomen from the fetters in which warm-blooded philanthropists are content to see them bound. But Mr Mundella was shrewd enough to see that the principles of his bill forced him into the position of saying, that the women for whom he proposes to legislate are slaves.

There is only one justification for limiting the hours of labour of women, unless it is proposed to subject the labour of men to similar legislation, and that is, that women are not free-agents. This is in fact the justification for legislating on behalf of children; they are not free-agents, and this suggests at once the fundamental distinction between State intervention on behalf of children and on behalf of adults.

But we now have to consider what may possibly be the second effect of this legislation: viz. that it may in some instances discourage the employment of women.

Any one who considers the social condition of this

slave-master to an unmarried than to a married woman. Again, it may be asked, how does Mr Mundella reconcile the statement that the manufacturers are slave-masters to the women whom they employ, with his indignant denial in the same speech that he cast any aspersions upon the character of the employers? Is it possible to say a more terribly severe thing against any man than that he treats a woman over whom he can exercise influence as a slave?

country, any one who knows how many women there are who have a severe struggle to maintain themselves by toil, any one who reflects that if a woman is driven from honest labour she may be forced by dire necessity into a life of misery and degradation, will hesitate to sanction legislation which may possibly have the effect of throwing impediments in the way of women earning their own maintenance. I know that the workmen who are demanding this bill indignantly repudiate the idea that they are jealous of women's labour. No one would more regret than I should to bring against them any unjust accusations. We are bound at once to accept their assurance that they are no longer influenced by any jealousy of women's labour, and we may indeed rejoice that that is not to happen in the future which has undoubtedly sometimes occurred in the past. For fairness compels me to say that our workmen have not always been uninfluenced by this jealousy of women's labour. We cannot forget that some years ago certain trades-unionists in the Potteries imperatively insisted that a certain rest for the arm, which they found almost essential to their work, should not be used by women when engaged in the same employment. Not long since the London tailors, when on strike, having never admitted a woman to their union, attempted to coerce women from availing themselves of the remunerative employment which was offered to them in consequence of the strike.

But this jealousy of women's labour has not been entirely confined to workmen. The same feeling has extended itself through every class of society. Last autumn a large number of the Post Office clerks

objected to the employment of women in the Post Office, which had been so wisely decided upon by Mr. Scudamore. And we have lately had abundant opportunities of judging of the extent to which the medical profession is jealous of the competition of women practitioners. I think it necessary to make these remarks, as we should at any rate be very cautious and very watchful when we are asked to interfere with the employment of women. But we have been told that one of the great arguments in favour of this bill is that it is demanded by the fathers and husbands of the women affected by it. But in pressing this argument does Mr Mundella forget that upon his own authority we have been assured that these very women are in servitude and slavery to these fathers and husbands, and therefore he asks us to place ourselves in the ridiculous position of letting those whom he has himself described as slave-masters decide what is best for their slaves?

But enough has now probably been said on the general principles involved in this bill. I will therefore proceed to deal with the specific facts and statements on which Mr Mundella supports his case.

The Government through the Home Secretary having stated that, "greatly as our knowledge has been supplemented by the report of the Commissioners recently appointed to investigate the condition of the women and children employed in factories, it is not large enough to justify the great economic changes proposed by this bill," Mr Mundella naturally came to the conclusion that this assertion of the Home Secretary must be controverted. Any one who reads Mr Mundella's remarks in the previous debate, and

at the same time remembers with how much ability and ingenuity he can speak, will at once see how extremely weak is his case. Instead of directly meeting the assertion of the Home Secretary, he endeavoured to disprove it by introducing a great mass of matter entirely irrelevant to the measure we are now considering. We remember, for instance, the piteous picture he drew of women coming to work in all weathers, bedrabbled in mud and wet up to their middles. He surely does not think that his bill will regulate the elements, and convert a wet day into a fine one. It really might be thought that there was a clause in the bill to supply women with waterproof cloaks and umbrellas. He also gave a harrowing description of the evils resulting from working in bad smells and in ill-ventilated rooms, but we look in vain in the bill for a single sanitary regulation. Again, we had a frightful account of the increasing number of accidents. The fallacies involved in these statistics of accidents will be referred to by subsequent speakers. But it is sufficient here to say that even if it is admitted that accidents have increased, this bill can exert no influence whatever in diminishing their number. There is not one word in it which would either cause machinery to be better fenced, or which would enable those who may be injured more easily to obtain compensation from their employers. We next listened to an eloquent description of the terrible consequences which ensue from a woman returning to work too soon after her confinement. On the authority of the Commissions we were told that when a woman thus returned to work, it was virtually

a sentence of death to the child. But if this bill became law to-morrow, a woman would be able to return to work within a week, nay, within a day of her confinement.

It was next attempted to shame the House into accepting this bill, because we were asked to believe that in factory legislation we were behind almost every other European country. In one respect this is no doubt true. In those countries, such as Prussia, where there is a general system of compulsory education, greater security is taken for the education of factory children than is the case in our own country; but, as I have before said, this is not the part of the bill which we are opposing. We are as anxious as Mr Mundella can be to provide additional guarantees for the education of factory children. The point of difference between him and us is that we object to the new restrictions which he wishes to impose upon the labour of adults, and with regard to this kind of legislative interference, instead of being behind other European countries, we have already imposed restrictions far more stringent than those which have been imposed in Germany, Austria, Baden, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Sweden, Russia, or France. The *Beehive* newspaper, the leading organ of the Trades-Unionists in this country, which has not only warmly supported Mr Mundella's bill, but which has with the utmost asperity attacked those who venture to oppose it, has recently said: "England is without doubt far in advance of every country in this matter, whether we consider the law itself or the strictness of its execution."

Again, Mr Mundella endeavoured to make it appear that the employment of women in the textile manufactures produced great mortality, and was particularly destructive of infant life. He seemed to think that he had proved his case when he shewed that there was a much greater mortality among women in the manufacturing districts than there is in four towns in the Black Country. These four towns were alluded to as if they were so unhealthy that the sanitary condition of a district must be most deplorable if it had a higher rate of mortality than prevails in these towns. But on referring to the returns of the Registrar-General, what do we discover? These towns in the Black Country, so far as the mortality of married women is concerned—and Mr Mundella was careful to confine his comparison to this point—take rank, not among the most unhealthy, but amongst the very healthiest districts in the kingdom. As an instance of the caution which ought to be exercised in drawing conclusions from incomplete statistics, it may be remarked that the rate of infant mortality is not greater in the textile towns than it is in these four towns where the rate of mortality of women is so low.

But now I come to certain statements which Mr Mundella made when he was not anxious to prove the unhealthiness of the manufacturing districts, but when he was pleading for their healthiness. I should be the last to accuse any man of inconsistency. We all probably in some period of our lives have changed our opinions ("Hear, hear!" from Mr MUNDELLA). Oh! I quite understand that cheer. When I came into this House, when I was younger and perhaps more

enthusiastic than I am now, I was more in favour of legislative interference. But is it to be supposed that any one coming into this House is to learn nothing from experience? But the inconsistency which I am referring to with regard to Mr Mundella is not a change of opinion which has gradually come over him, as facts have dawned upon him or as years roll by. I wish to direct the particular attention of the House to certain statements he made in reference to the report of the Factory Commissioners, when a few weeks since he was speaking in favour of the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act, and to compare what he then said with the statements he made in reference to the same report when moving the second reading of this bill. On the former occasion we were reminded that two commissioners had lately been down to the manufacturing districts; they had examined 10,000 children entirely at haphazard, and had found them healthy and entirely free from diathetic disease. But this is not the strangest part of the story. Mr Mundella was anxious to make a point against Sir J. Pakington, who had spoken in the debate on the Contagious Diseases Act. He therefore said, "Let the Right Honourable gentleman (Sir J. Pakington) see the width and weight of the men of Sheffield, and then he will cease to deplore a sickly population." Well, if Sir J. Pakington will give a similar invitation to Mr Mundella, and ask him to visit the textile towns, he, in his turn, will cease to deplore a sickly population, for he will discover that in the health of their population, whether estimated by the death-rate of women between 15 and 45, or between 45 and 55, or the

death-rate of children under 10, the 15 principal textile towns are from 15 to 20 per cent. healthier than the sanitary paradise Mr Mundella has the happiness to represent.

I have now gone through most of the statements of Mr Mundella, and I will refer again to the remark of the Home Secretary, that, although the knowledge of the Government has been extended by the inquiries of the Commissioners, the facts do not justify such a great economical change as is proposed by this bill. I hope the Home Secretary is of the same opinion still. I hope this sensible remark of his will not be repudiated by his colleagues, and that upon this question he represents not only himself but the Government. I shall be able to shew from the report of the Commissioners, who were specially sent down to ascertain the facts of the case, that the Home Secretary did not speak half strongly enough, and that he ought to have said not only that the facts do not justify the bill, but that they absolutely disprove the necessity for this legislation. All the facts that I am about to mention are taken from this report, and their significance is greatly increased when it is remembered that the Commissioners evidently have a bias in favour of this legislation.

In the first place there is this most remarkable fact. They asked 163 medical men whether the present hours of labour were injurious to women. If a great majority of these medical men had answered this question in the affirmative, I could understand this bill being introduced. But far from a majority being of the opinion that the present hours of labour

are too long, only 32 out of the 163 are of this opinion, the remaining 131 distinctly affirming that the present hours are not too long. But this is not all. 171 medical men were asked whether factory labour was especially injurious to women. 99 gave a direct negative to the question, 12 returned answers which were irrelevant, and the remaining 57 chiefly confined their remarks to defective sanitary arrangements, which are injurious to men and women alike, and which are not in the slightest degree touched by this bill. Medical testimony therefore entirely fails to provide a justification for this bill.

I will now refer to another very remarkable admission contained in the report of these Commissioners. Any one who is practically acquainted with cotton manufacturing processes knows perfectly well that the great majority of women who are employed are engaged in the five processes of reeling, doubling, winding, warping and weaving. The Commissioners themselves admit that three-fourths of the women employed in factories are engaged in one or other of these occupations, and they further admit that these occupations have no debilitating tendency. It is particularly worthy of remark that in almost every instance the complaints of the Commissioners refer to evils resulting either from defective sanitary arrangements or from the employment of married women. Thus, with regard to defective sanitary arrangements, they speak of cesspools. It surely cannot be supposed that a Nine Hours Bill will empty or purify a cesspool. Once more let me say that there is not a single sanitary clause in the bill.

Then again with regard to the employment of married women, it is to be observed that the bill makes no distinction whatever between married and unmarried women. It has been calculated that only a small minority of the women at work are married. The proportion is said to be about one-tenth.

Mr MUNDELLA: One-third of the women employed are married.

Mr FAWCETT: I believe such an estimate is far too high; but even if we assume it to be correct, we must remember that perhaps not more than one-third of the married women have young children. Now the evils upon which the Commissioners lay the greatest stress are to be attributed to women going to work too soon after their confinement, and to their neglecting their young children; now it appears from the figures just quoted that these evils can only happen in the case of a small minority of the entire number of women who are at work.

I will now ask the House for a moment to consider some of the absurdities into which we shall be led if we are prepared to legislate upon the report of these Commissioners. In mentioning various disadvantages associated with the employment of women and children in the factories, there is one subject on which they lay particular stress. They bring forward medical evidence to shew that the diseases of the digestive organs prevalent in the factory districts are induced by the excessive use of tea. Well, I suppose if this mania for legislative interference continues, we shall soon have introduced into this House a Permissive Prohibitory Tea Bill.

Having studied the report of the Commissioners with the greatest care, I believe I am justified in saying that it does not contain one single argument to justify legislative restriction upon the labour of adults. They adduce some facts with the object of shewing that certain restrictions should be imposed upon the employment of married women and they mention many facts to prove that the sanitary condition of the mills, although improving, is still in a state which leaves much to be desired.

Now, as I have occupied so much of the time of the House, I will refer very briefly to the vexed question of foreign competition. Others are far more competent to deal with it. I confess I have no special knowledge of the subject, but this I am bound to say: that considering the serious and gratifying rise of wages—serious in one aspect and gratifying in another—considering, I say, the marked rise of wages in this country, the great increase in the price of coal, the rapid development of manufacturing industry in countries in which formerly there were few manufactures —considering all these facts, we must come to the conclusion that foreign competition presents itself in a very different light from what it did some years since. I can speak with impartiality upon this subject because I have no personal interest in the matter. But it is a subject which I have examined with the greatest possible interest, and I believe this to be the case: that at the present time in many most important branches of industry in this country, the competition between us and foreigners is so keen and so close, that if you place the slightest legislative impediment in the way

of industrial development, the balance may be turned against us, and our trade may greatly suffer. There cannot be a greater delusion than to suppose that with regard to foreign competition employers are chiefly concerned. They have accumulated capital. If trade declines they can retire from business and live upon their means. But the decline of trade means loss of employment to the labourer, and upon him will fall with maximum intensity the bitter consequences of industrial depression.

There is one other consideration which, if the House will allow me, I will present to them for a moment. Now that the artisans of this country have happily been enfranchised, if you once concede their demand for a Nine Hours Bill, where is this legislation to stop? Reckless pledges and high expectations will be held out to them, and at the coming election we shall see with what eagerness and avidity candidates will rush in and pledge themselves in favour of a Nine Hours Bill. Can there be any security that we shall stop there? Why, what security can we have that we shall not next have an Eight Hours Bill? Some operatives came to me the other day and said: "If you don't give up your opposition we will demand an Eight Hours Bill." "Well," I said, "you will not stop there. Of course you will demand a Seven Hours Bill." Encourage these demands and what shall we see? We shall see the industry of this country, we shall see the self-reliance and independence of its people, put up to a demoralizing Dutch auction of degrading promises and delusive pledges.

I have opposed this bill in the interests of the

working classes. I ask the House to reject this measure so far as it applies to the labour of adults, because I believe that at the present moment we can render no greater service to the working classes of this country than firmly to check the growing tendency which there is for them to rely upon State intervention. If we encourage this tendency, step by step we shall so enervate them, that at last they will come to us like helpless children and ask us to be their guardians, to say what wages they shall receive, what time they shall go to bed, and to prevent them doing a hundred things which they know they ought not to do. I entreat the House to remember this: that it is not by the act of the despot alone that liberty is destroyed. That vigour of national life, which is the only guarantee for freedom, must inevitably decline, if the Government is permitted to envelope the people in a great network of officialism. I believe the day is not far distant when, if we are not very careful, the labouring classes of this country will find from bitter experience that their worst enemy is not the so-called cold-blooded economist, but that they have infinitely more to fear from a misguided benevolence and a mistaken and meddlesome philanthropy.

ELECTION EXPENSES.

SECOND READING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION EXPENSES BILL, JUNE 18, 1873.

ALTHOUGH this bill contains principles of the greatest importance, yet its provisions are so simple that I think I shall be able to explain them in a very few sentences. The bill proposes, in the first place, to make candidates at elections no longer liable for the necessary election expenses, but to transfer that liability to the locality; in the next place, it provides a security against vexatious candidatures. After considerable reflection it appears to me that the best way to protect constituencies against vexatious and unnecessary candidatures, is to make each candidate who does not secure a reasonable amount of support liable for his share of the expenses, just in the same way as he is under the existing law. Opinions may of course differ as to what should be considered a reasonable amount of support. In this bill I have put it at one-fifth of the whole number of the electors polled, thinking that if a candidate does not obtain so much support as this, he can have had no reasonable chance of success, and therefore it would be unfair that he should

be able to throw upon the constituency his share of the expenses, when very probably his chief motive in going to the poll was, by gaining a little notoriety, to gratify his personal vanity. If it is thought that the proportion of one-fifth is too high, I shall have no objection whatever to make it one-sixth, one-seventh, or one-eighth. Having given this brief explanation of the provisions of the bill, I will proceed to consider the chief arguments which will probably be urged against it. First and foremost it will no doubt be contended that it would be unfair and impolitic to throw any new charge on the rates until the whole question of local taxation has been settled. The same argument was urged last Wednesday in opposition to a measure for the abolition of tolls on bridges in Scotland, but the House arrived at the conclusion that the imposition of a new charge on the rates ought not to stand in the way of a necessary reform. It seems to me, however, that the present position of the question of local taxation, instead of suggesting a reason for not proceeding with this bill, provides a most conclusive argument in favour of considering the measure on its merits. The subject of local taxation has been forced into the prominent position it now occupies because there are many who think that certain local charges ought to be defrayed out of imperial funds. Although I do not sympathize with these opinions, yet it appears to me that those who hold them should be the first to recognize the fact that even from their point of view it is of the utmost importance that before the bargain between imperial and local finance is finally adjusted, we should arrive as far as possible

at a definite conclusion as to what ought and what ought not to be considered local charges. Without such information the problem of local taxation cannot be solved. How can the amount of assistance which ought to be given from imperial to local funds be determined, if it is undecided whether or not certain charges shall be thrown upon local taxation? Suppose the passing of this bill is deferred until after the subject of local taxation has been settled. Would not the hon. baronet the member for South Devon (Sir Massey Lopes) and those who act with him be placed in this unfortunate and unfair position? They would suddenly find that immediately after a certain amount of assistance had been given from imperial funds to local finance, a new charge was thrown upon the rates. Would they not then be able to say: "We ought to have had warning of what was going to be done; we might have got better terms when arranging the bargain, if we had been told of this new local charge"? But when it is borne in mind how insignificant is the charge which this bill throws upon the rates,—it has been calculated it would only take 1½*d.* from the occupier of a £10 house once in three years—I really feel that an apology is due to hon. members for having made these remarks on local taxation. I would not have done so did I not know that this cry about local taxation and addition to rates is likely to exercise no inconsiderable influence on the division. I am almost afraid that the Government, on the miserable plea that the question of local taxation has not been settled, will refuse on the present occasion to support this bill, although they were responsible

for its introduction last year[1]. Never perhaps was the levy of ½*d.* a year from a £10 ratepayer made to do such efficient service as it has in reference to this measure. Again and again has it been said that its principle is indisputably just, but any addition to the rates is so unpopular in the constituencies that no vote would be likely to do so much to endanger a member's seat as one given in favour of this bill. I cannot help feeling that some of those who talk in this way are really speaking six words for themselves and one for those whom they represent. For, after all, is there any evidence that the bill is unpopular? Can there not, on the contrary, be adduced the strongest evidence of its popularity? It has now been six years before the House, and, so far as I am aware, a petition has never been presented against it. Not only has no resolution ever been passed at a public meeting against it, but large and influential public meetings in every part of the country have again and again appealed to Parliament to pass this bill. Perhaps, however, the strongest evidence that can be adduced in favour of its general popularity is the almost unprecedented unanimity with which it has been supported by every section of the Press. When the proposal was last before the House, I believe, with the exception of the *Morning Post*, every paper in London, both daily and weekly, wrote strongly in its favour. Facts such as these are sufficient to prove that the bill is certainly far from being unpopular in

[1] From a Speech made on behalf of the Government by the Home Secretary (Mr Bruce), in a subsequent part of the debate, it was shewn that this surmise was correct.

the constituencies. But the weapon of attack upon which the opponents of the measure place their chief reliance is to conjure up the prospect of every seat being scrambled for by a great number of fictitious candidates, who, although they have not the slightest chance of being returned, gladly avail themselves of an opportunity of securing a certain amount of notoriety at other peoples' expense. Far from the measure, however, being likely to produce this effect, I think I shall be able to shew that it must exert an exactly opposite influence. It has been often pointed out that the greatest advantage the bill would secure is, that, so far as electoral expenditure is concerned, it would cause the constituencies to have a direct interest in economy, whereas under the present system, the more extravagance there is, the greater is the amount of money distributed amongst them. We all know that under the existing state of things, it not unfrequently happens that the majority of a constituency is perfectly well satisfied with the sitting members, but as the time for the election arrives, the chance of there being no contest arouses to unwonted activity the electioneering agents, the attorneys, the paid canvassers, the printers, the newspaper proprietors,—in fact, the whole electioneering crew to whom an election contest is a harvest of gain. No stone is left unturned to bring about the desired result. The sitting members are attacked in the local press. Adverse rumours are circulated against them; and all this is done, if not with the distinct approval, at any rate with the tacit connivance of the constituency, for it is known that an election contest means an expenditure of, perhaps,

£10,000, and the feeling naturally spreads that such a lavish outlay must be good for the trade of the place. Is it not, however, perfectly certain that if candidates no longer bore the necessary expenses of elections, that instead of unnecessary contests being thus encouraged, the public opinion of a constituency would be actively exerted to discourage them? Would not the electioneering agents, and others who try to get up a contest to put money into their own pockets, be very quickly told that it was too bad of them, in order to gain something themselves, to throw a quite unnecessary charge upon the rates? In fact, what occurs now and what would occur if this bill became law can be stated in a single sentence. The promoter of an unnecessary contest is now regarded as a benefactor to the constituency; he would then have to bear the obloquy of wishing to tax the ratepayers in order to obtain some money for himself.

But the consideration to which I wish most particularly to direct the attention of the House is this: I will ask honourable members whether they can view without alarm the increasing tendency there is at the present time to make elections more and more expensive. If something is not promptly done to check this tendency, it will soon come to pass that scarcely any one will obtain a seat unless he is able and willing to squander many thousands in an election contest. Under such circumstances this House cannot be a truly national Parliament. It will gradually become an assembly where none but the rich can enter; and a severe blow will then have been struck, not only at the efficiency, but at the permanence of representa-

tive Government in this country. Perhaps at no time in our political history has it been of so much importance that no unnecessary barrier should be thrown in the way of these who are not rich obtaining seats in this House. It can scarcely be doubted, by even the most casual observer of the signs of the times, that the questions which are most likely to engage the attention of Parliament during the next few years are those which may be regarded as social and economic, rather than political. From one end of the country to the other a great struggle between capital and labour is going on, and this contest must sooner or later make itself felt in this House. When we have to discuss the relations between capital and labour, it is of quite as much consequence to the capitalist as it is to the labourer that labour as well as capital should be represented. Although I am quite ready to admit that this bill has hitherto been too much discussed as if its main object was to facilitate the entrance of working men into Parliament, and although I am also ready to admit that the influence it will exert in this direction has been much exaggerated both by its friends and its opponents, yet I think it is almost impossible to overestimate the advantage of passing this bill, before those social and economic questions come on for discussion in which the working classes are specially interested. Honourable members should remember, whatever may be their own opinions on the subject, that the workmen consider they have no reasonable chance of securing a due representation of labour until this bill is passed. It should further be considered that the present system not only excludes

workmen from Parliament, but it is suggested that this is the motive which prompts many in this House to oppose the bill. Any legislation, therefore, which particularly affects the working classes, will, under the present state of things, be looked on with suspicion and distrust. Depend upon it, although we may be actuated by the purest and most disinterested motives, although the measures we may pass, in which capital and labour are concerned, may be the justest and the wisest, yet our intentions will be suspected and the measures themselves will be robbed of half the influence for good they might produce, as long as the working classes are able to say, "Our interests are legislated for by an assembly from which we are purposely excluded, because expenses are thrown upon us which we cannot afford to pay." It has been sometimes said that even if this bill were passed not a single workman would be returned to Parliament. I, of course, cannot say whether this would or would not be the case; but even if it could be known that not a single workman would be returned, it certainly would not alter my opinion as to the importance of passing this bill. We could then no longer be accused by the working classes of intentionally maintaining a system with the view of excluding them from Parliament, but, on the contrary, we should be able to say, "You have no longer any reason to distrust or to suspect us; we have done all that we can to facilitate your entrance into this House; we have removed from your path the impediments which the law had created; and if you have returned none of your own class to represent you,

you alone are responsible, we at least cannot be blamed."

There is, however, another aspect in which the increasing costliness of elections can be viewed, which certainly suggests some very grave considerations. It is not difficult to indicate the causes which each year render it more and more difficult for those who are not rich to follow a Parliamentary life. In the first place, the greater part of the small boroughs have been abolished; secondly, the extension of the suffrage has increased the number of electors in each constituency; thirdly, as the small boroughs are abolished, more power is concentrated upon the large constituencies. In thus alluding to these changes, I trust I shall not be misunderstood. Far from regretting them, I look upon them as important and necessary reforms. It seems to me, however, peculiarly to be the duty of our statesmen to see, when a new and better state of things has been called into existence, whether there may not be associated with the improvement some disadvantage which ought as far as possible to be removed or counteracted. There is another circumstance which, during the last few years, has exerted an exceptional influence in increasing the cost of elections. Never before has there been such commercial activity. Vast fortunes have been accumulated with unprecedented rapidity. One of the first things that a man thinks of in this country, when he becomes the possessor of two or three hundred thousand pounds, is to try to obtain a seat in this House. He supposes that if he can write M.P. after his name, his social position is improved. What is the

inevitable result? The number of seats in this House is limited. We therefore have an article the supply of which cannot be augmented, and the demand for which is constantly increasing. Not only each year does it happen that there is a greater number of people willing to purchase the article, but they can afford to pay for it a higher price. Under these circumstances, it is just as certain that the cost of becoming a member of Parliament will advance as it is that the price of any ordinary article of merchandise will increase, if, whilst its supply remains fixed, the demand for it is constantly becoming greater. I hope it will not be supposed that I object to this growing trade prosperity. I have only referred to it in order to shew all the tendencies of the age seem to bring home to us the importance of calling into operation any agency which is likely to promote economy at elections. Let me, before leaving this branch of the subject, ask the House for one moment to consider how we shall in future be able to obtain that administrative capacity which is the surest mark of true statesmanship, if seats in this House are chiefly to be secured by successful men of business. If a man enters Parliament at forty-five or fifty, his energies up to that time having been mainly absorbed in amassing wealth, is it not unreasonable to suppose that he possesses either the inclination or the requisite training to become an able administrator? If we look along the Treasury Bench, does not the example of the Prime Minister and others shew, that those who are most competent to deal with complicated and difficult questions are those who have been able to

enter Parliament without staying to spend some of the best years of their life in acquiring a fortune? Having now stated some of the leading arguments in favour of the bill, I will say a few words in anticipation of one remark which, I doubt not, will be made in the course of the present debate. I shall in all probability be told that I have been ill-advised in again bringing forward this measure in the face of certain defeat; but had I been deterred by fear of defeat, I should scarcely have ever introduced any measure into this House. The chief use of an independent member is to bring into notice the views of a minority, and, gradually obtain a sufficient amount of public opinion in support of a question, to secure its ultimate success. The measure which is now before the House has certainly had a somewhat chequered career. Six years ago I endeavoured to effect the object sought to be obtained by introducing a clause into the Corrupt Practices Act of the late Conservative Government, and the proposal was carried by a majority of eight on one occasion and nine on another. On the report of the bill, the leader of the Conservative party (Mr Disraeli), taking the House by surprise, succeeded in throwing out the clause by a majority of twelve. On the third reading of the bill I again raised the question, and was then defeated by only a small majority. This occurred just on the eve of the general election. Directly the new Parliament met, I again brought forward the subject by introducing a bill almost exactly similar to the one which is now before the House. The division on the second reading took place quite at the commencement

of the session. It was, I believe, the first occasion on which there was a division in the present Parliament. The bill was then only rejected in a full House by the narrow majority of three. It is to be particularly noted that although the Government nominally supported the bill, yet they were responsible for its defeat. All the members of the Government except three were absent from the division. When they are really interested in some question, when, for instance, they want to enclose some open space, when they wish to rob the poor man of his common, when they are anxious to squander public money, again and again have we seen that not three but thirty members of the Government go into the division lobby. Being unfortunately of too unsuspecting a disposition, I was not warned as I ought to have been by this occurrence, but in a too confiding moment I entrusted the measure to the Government. Whether the atmosphere which surrounds the Treasury bench was too enervating for its constitution, I cannot say, but since the bill has been under the care of the Government it has been defeated by a majority of ninety. We all know that, valuable as the support of a Government is when they are in earnest, they can, more effectually perhaps than any one else, kill a measure by half-hearted support. The honourable member for Shaftesbury (Mr Glyn) has usually to act the part of a foster-parent to proposals brought forward by the Government; but with regard to this particular question, instead of performing his paternal functions, he has rather imitated the example of the wicked uncle whom we all remember in

the nursery tale of the Babes in the Wood. Under these circumstances, I trust the House will not think me rash in again taking the bill under my charge, in the hope that it will regain health and strength in the more bracing atmosphere of independence. If as large a majority should vote against it as when it was in the hands of the Government, I shall simply conclude that its constitution is still weak; I shall not at any rate be so unkind as to abandon it, feeling it more incumbent on me than ever to try to restore it to its former health and strength.

It is sometimes said that there is not now so much need for this bill as there was before the Ballot Act was passed. I trust the fond hopes of those will be realized who think that the Ballot will prove a death-blow to political corruption. I believe, however, that electoral corruption will continue to thrive in full vigour, until a fundamental change is effected in the relations between members of Parliament and those whom they represent. So long as the sentiment is encouraged that a seat in this House is a privilege for which a high price can be legitimately asked, the more wealthy the country becomes, the more actively will Parliamentary honours be competed for, the more money will be squandered in elections, and the more will corruption flourish. Are we not giving the most effective sanction in our power to the theory that a constituency confers a favour on its representative, if we persist in maintaining a system which renders him, and not the constituency, liable for the necessary expenses incurred in enabling it to exercise its choice? If a Poor Law Guardian,

Town Councillor, or a member of a School-Board has to be elected, the locality, and not the candidate, bears the necessary expenses of the election. There cannot be any guarantee either for electoral purity or for the efficiency of representative institutions, as long as constituencies think that so great a favour is conferred upon a representative that he can be fairly subjected to a heavy pecuniary fine. This measure, if it were passed, would exercise a not unimportant influence in securing a more general recognition of the fact, that a member, if he serves his constituents faithfully, discharges a most difficult and onerous duty, and that it is even more unreasonable to make him pay for performing this duty than it would be to expect the labourer to work without wages. Believing that this bill would at least do something to place the relations between members and their constituents on a more just and satisfactory basis, I would, even if there were no other reason in its favour, most earnestly commend it to the favourable consideration of the House and the country.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

SECOND READING OF THE WOMEN'S DISABILITIES BILL, MAY, 1873.

As my name is appended to the petition in favour of this bill, from resident members of the University of Cambridge, which has been so pointedly alluded to by the junior member for the University (Mr Beresford Hope), I trust the House will allow me to make a few remarks. He seems to think that the petition loses much of its weight because it was forwarded to him by a lady. I believe I have authority to state that there is not a single gentleman who signed that petition who is not perfectly satisfied with the manner in which it has been forwarded to the hon. gentleman. The lady from whom he seems to object to have received it, is not only hon. secretary of the London Society for Women's Suffrage, she is also a daughter of one of the most distinguished resident members of the University. We therefore felt that there was no one to whom the petition could be more properly entrusted. I have only one other remark to make in reference to his speech. He says that if women had votes they would be withdrawn from their domestic duties, and that it would be impossible for them to devote the time necessary to enable them to study

public questions. Now, in the name of common sense, does he wish us to believe that every man who has a vote is drawn away from the pursuits of his life and from his ordinary daily labour, that an artisan working in a mill, a barrister practising in court, a doctor attending his patients, cannot properly study public questions without neglecting his ordinary employment. Allow me upon this subject to repeat an anecdote which was related to me a few minutes ago by an hon. member sitting near me, who represents a northern borough. It will shew that the male electors who have votes, are not always, even in their leisure moments, engaged in studying public affairs, but that they sometimes occupy themselves with much less honourable pursuits. I think that the anecdote will forcibly illustrate the injustice of the present system. My hon. friend told me that at a recent election, when he was canvassing the borough he represents, he, and a distinguished member of this House, who was then his colleague, in endeavouring to find two of the electors they wished to canvass, discovered them sotting in a public house. In fact they were drunk, and were certainly not devoting their leisure moments to the study of politics. After my hon. friend had had an interview with his two drunken constituents, and was leaving them, a woman came out of her house and said, "I have paid rates for twenty years. How can you say that I ought not to have a vote when you have just been soliciting the votes of these two drunken men?" "Well," my hon. friend said, "I think what you say is very reasonable," and ever since then he has been a consistent supporter

of this bill. I wish now, in a few words, to refer to the speech of the right hon. gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr Bruce). I am not going to be drawn into a discussion as to the relative ability of men and women. It is not necessary in order to justify our support of this bill to assert that men and women are intellectually equal in all respects. Nobody can decide the point until the experiment has been fairly tried, and it never yet has been fairly tried. Give women the same opportunities for intellectual development as men, and then, and not till then, shall we be able to say what they can do. I was certainly astonished to hear the Home Secretary say that no woman had ever been a great painter. Does he forget Rosa Bonheur? He said further, that no woman had ever been a great musical composer. He is not perhaps aware of a story that shews that women do not always receive their due deserts. Women do their work quietly, and many a man who has attained great success would never have filled so distinguished a position if it had not been that some woman had helped him. Upon this very question of musical composition it appears from Mendelssohn's correspondence that one of the most admired pieces attributed to Mendelssohn was entirely the composition of his sister. That great composer also admitted that she had helped him in his other works to an extent which he could not describe. I must confess that the Home Secretary astonished me very considerably by going into an historical argument, in which he seemed to think that he had discovered, as a reason why women should not have votes, that it was men who

invaded England at the Norman Conquest, and that it was the barons who obtained Magna Charta from King John.' If this argument is worth anything it certainly amounts to this, that no one should have votes except those who have invaded England or those who have succeeded in humbling the power of the Crown. Repeating the argument of the right hon. member for Kilmarnock (Mr Bouverie), the Home Secretary said, the great objection to the bill of my hon. friend was that if it were carried it would ultimately lead to the giving of votes to married women and to women taking seats in this house. Before I reply to that argument let me say that it is an old one. Never was there a great change proposed, or a great measure of reform brought forward, but that some "bogey" was immediately called up to alarm and terrify us. When Catholic emancipation was proposed and it was advocated that Catholics should have seats in this House, one of the favourite arguments of the opponents of the proposal was, that if Catholics were admitted to this House there was no reason why a Catholic should not sit upon the throne. One of the favourite arguments used by the opponents of household suffrage was, that if household suffrage were granted there was only one other step, and that was manhood suffrage. We have not been frightened by arguments such as these, but it seems to me that the Home Secretary and Mr Bouverie are indulging in doctrines which are dangerous, when they argue as if property is no longer to be the basis of the qualification for a vote in this country. Mr Bouverie quoted with commendation a saying of the democratic

Benjamin Franklin, that it is idle to suppose that property possesses the exclusive right to the franchise. Without presuming too confidently to predict what will happen, I have no hesitation in saying that these words of the right hon. gentleman the member for Kilmarnock will next Easter Monday be quoted with rapturous applause, when 60,000 men again gather together on the Town Moor at Newcastle to demand manhood suffrage. There is no logical reason why married women should not have votes if you demand manhood suffrage. But we who support this bill do not wish to declare that we desire that the franchise should be based upon any other condition than that which it is based upon at the present moment, namely, property. Unless a woman can obtain a vote by property we do not wish to do anything either to admit her or to exclude her. If you throw this argument of property aside, you will be lending assistance to the agitation in favour of manhood suffrage, a course which I believe you will heartily repent. I wish now, as briefly as possible, to go through the leading arguments which have been advanced in the debate upon this bill. The reasons in its favour have been stated so often, and I am so anxious to occupy as little as possible of the time of the House, that it appears to me to be the fairer course to deal with the arguments against rather than with those in favour of the bill. The first argument is that the majority of women do not ask for this bill, and that a great number of them are opposed to it. If this bill contemplated making a woman vote who did not wish to vote, it would not find a more resolute opponent in this House than

myself. But when you say that a majority of women are opposed to it, I say that it is impossible to prove it; and I say further, that the same argument in an analogous case you did not accept as conclusive. I remember perfectly well, when I first came into this House, that I heard it stated again and again that the majority of the working classes of this country were not in favour of the extension of the suffrage. It was said that it was only the active politicians among them, just as it is now said that it is only the active women agitators who are in favour of this bill. Now, what do we observe? No doubt it never could be proved that a majority of the working classes were in favour of the extension of the suffrage, any more than it can be proved now that a majority of the agricultural labourers are in favour of household suffrage in counties; and yet it was again and again stated that the majority of the working classes were in favour of household suffrage. The House soon after that recognized the justice of the claim for an extension of the suffrage to the artisan class. But the argument which no doubt produced the most influence on the House is this, that at the present time the interests of women are far better looked after by men than they would be looked after by themselves; and it is said by the Home Secretary that if you could only prove to him that women's questions of a vitally interesting nature were treated with injustice in this House, it would be a conclusive argument in favour of voting for the bill. Nothing could be further from my mind than to accuse this House of consciously doing anything which is unjust or wrong to women, but women and men may

have very different views of what is best for women; and our position is this, that according to the generally accepted principles of representative government it is only fair that women should be able to give expression to their wishes on measures likely to affect their interests. Take for instance the case of educational endowments. The Endowed Schools Commissioners have again and again said that the feeling they find prevalent in towns is, that educational endowments should be so used that the wants of every boy should be satisfied before any attention is paid to the wants of girls. What right have we to suppose that this is the opinion of women on this subject, considering their enthusiasm for education? What right have we to suppose that if they could exercise power in this House they would not demand an equal share in the educational endowments of the country? I wish to direct the attention of the House to what seems to me a most important argument on this subject. Hitherto the question has been treated too much as if it simply concerned women of property. Now, you say that men can be safely entrusted to legislate for women—that men can be safely entrusted in the constituencies to represent the wants of women. Any one who studies the industrial history of the country—any one who looks to what trades' unions have done—cannot for a moment believe in this conclusion. What are the arguments in favour of trades' unions? I am not opposed to trades' unions. One of the first speeches I ever made was in their favour, but at the same time I do not conceal their defects. It has been again and again asserted that without the power of

combining in trades' unions it would be impossible for workmen to obtain a proper reward for their labour, and that it would be impossible to secure their just rights. This is their deliberate conviction asserted a thousand times over. But how often have they admitted a woman to these trades' unions? They have almost invariably excluded women; although they say that without these combinations it is impossible for labour to obtain its just reward, they take very good care to exclude women from them. I have known, on several occasions, when a trades' union has organized a strike, that when the women who had had no voice in deciding upon the strike shewed themselves anxious to take advantage of the labour market, the trades' unionists stood outside the shops to keep women away from doing the work that was offered to them. What took place in the Potteries? It is perfectly well known that for years and years men were so jealous of the competition of women labourers that they made it a rule in the trades' union that the whole force of the union should be used to prevent women from using the hand-rest which the men invariably avail themselves of, and which greatly facilitates the rapidity and precision of the work. Let us look to our legislation for the future, and I ask the House calmly to consider whether, looking at some of the measures likely to be brought forward, it is not of essential importance that we should take the opinion of women upon them. Probably there is no social measure affecting the manufacturing districts which is of so much interest at the present time as the Nine Hours Bill, introduced by

the honourable member for Sheffield (Mr Mundella). I have no doubt that the honourable member has introduced that bill with the purest motives; it is a bill that affects vitally the interests of the unrepresented classes. Now what is this bill? It is a bill that limits the labour of women to nine hours a day. What must be the inevitable result of that bill? It must do one of two things—either impose a legislative limit of nine hours a day over all the country, and in that case it ought to be called a general Nine Hours Bill, or it must inevitably place the most serious restrictions and impediments upon the employment of women. For how can a manufacturer, unless he employs women on the principle of half-time, say that directly the nine hours are up, every woman must leave, and then let the mill go on working for another hour or two without a woman being employed? The inevitable result will be to place grievous impediments in the way of the employment of women, and before we sanction such a measure it certainly seems to me that women should be consulted. I am bound in candour to say—I don't know whether the sentiment is popular or not—that, looking to the past industrial history of the country, and seeing what the trades' unionists have sometimes done to women, I am not certain that there is not at the bottom of the movement a feeling which is prompted by the jealousy of men with regard to the labour of women. But there is an argument, perhaps not avowed in this House, that is, nevertheless, producing a great influence upon the Liberal members, and it is one to which I wish particularly to direct the attention of honourable

members. I have heard it said again and again, by Liberal friends of mine, that they cannot vote for this bill because they think one of its consequences would be to hinder the disestablishment of the Church. They are of opinion that the majority of women are opposed to disestablishment, and that if this bill is passed it will put back that question fifty years. I am anxious to speak on this subject, because I am now and I have always been in favour of disestablishment. But although these are my sentiments, it certainly seems to me to be an injustice of the grossest possible kind if we for one moment sanction the exclusion of women simply because we feel that they are so much in favour of the continuance of the Church that if they could exercise their vote the establishment of the Church would continue. Would it not be an injustice, almost amounting to a fraud, if the Church were disestablished on the plea that just a bare majority of the electors were in favour of disestablishment, when, at the same time, we believe that the feeling of women in favour of establishment is so great that the majority of the men would represent only a minority of the whole nation, and that taking men and women together the majority is not in favour of disestablishment but of establishment? It may of course be said that in some questions the opinion of men is more important than that of women, and that the opinion of 100,000 men in favour of a particular proposal represents more weight than the opinion of 100,000 women against it. But can you say this with regard to such a question as the Church, or the question of the Nine Hours Bill, or others I might enumerate?

Surely you cannot say it with regard to the Church, for the spiritual welfare of women is of just as much importance as the spiritual welfare of men, and in a question whether the Church should be continued as an established Church or not the opinion of women ought to exercise as much influence as the opinion of men. We ought to endeavour to trace out what is the effect of the Church establishment upon the great mass of the people, and to whom would you go to obtain this opinion? It seems to me that if I wished to ascertain what is the effect which the Church is producing at the present time I should go to those who are most practically acquainted with its working—those who see most clearly its influence among the poor—and I believe they are women and not men. Now, however much I may be in favour of disestablishment, it seems to me that to exclude women from the vote, simply because we think it would delay the reform we desire, is sanctioning a principle which is essentially unfair, essentially unjust; and is quite as unreasonable as if the Church party were to try to disfranchise the Nonconformists because the Nonconformists have tried to disestablish them.

Again, those who oppose this bill cannot rest the exclusion of women upon the ground that they are unfit intellectually for the franchise. Last year this House did that which shewed conclusively that no intellectual qualification is required of the male electors. We cast to the winds the idea of anything like intellectual fitness when we were occupied night after night in elaborating various schemes for securing the representation of the illiterate voter. It is evident, I think,

that "coming events cast their shadows before." I infer from the speech of the Home Secretary that the Government are about to join the Liberal members at this end of the House in support of the bill of my honourable friend the member for the Border Boroughs (Mr Trevelyan) in favour of giving the agricultural labourer a vote. But if we enfranchise the agricultural labourer, and refuse to give a vote to women, we shall be landed in this dilemma;—we shall declare that although the labourer, however ignorant, ought to have a vote, no woman, however intellectual, ought to enjoy it.

I will in conclusion allude to one circumstance which, no doubt, has greatly prejudiced this bill. It has so happened that my honourable friend the member for Manchester (Mr Jacob Bright) has been identified with another agitation, and it has also happened that many persons who are advocates of this bill outside this House have also been identified with that agitation in favour of the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. It appears to me singularly unfair to let such a consideration as this in the least degree influence our decision. It would be just as unfair as it would be to let our decision be influenced on any question that can be brought forward by my honourable friend the member for Carlisle (Sir Wilfrid Lawson), because he happens to be identified with the Permissive Bill. I can only say that many of those who support this bill differ fundamentally from the views held by the honourable member for Manchester in reference to the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts; and many of those who are the strongest advocates of the Women's

Disabilities Bill outside the House are also opposed to the manner in which the agitation against the Contagious Diseases Acts has been conducted. Now I will only say in reply to the argument of the right honourable member for Kilmarnock that he seems to think that those who support this bill wish to make women less womanly. If the right honourable gentleman can convince me that giving them a vote would make them in any respect less womanly, or men less manly, I would immediately vote against the bill. He concluded by quoting a sentence from Addison, in which he says that the glory of a state consists in the modesty of women and the courage of men. I have yet to learn that this bill is calculated to make women less modest; and I have also yet to learn that giving women a vote can in the slightest degree diminish the courage of men. It is probable, nay, almost certain, that this measure will not be accepted on the present occasion. The feeling in its favour is however growing, and, if there are no more solid reasons than those which have been advanced against it to-day, it will certainly stand the trial of free discussion. It is possible that women exaggerate the advantages which the passing of this bill will confer upon them, but I am most firmly convinced that the other consequences which are attributed to it by the opponents of the measure are infinitely more exaggerated.

HOUSEHOLD SUFFRAGE IN COUNTIES

AND

THE REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

SECOND READING OF MR TREVELYAN'S BILL FOR EXTENDING HOUSEHOLD SUFFRAGE TO COUNTIES.

JULY 23, 1873.

AFTER the speech to which we have just listened from the Vice-President of the Council (Mr Forster)[1], and after the message which has been sent to us by the Prime Minister, it cannot be doubted that the bill has been virtually taken out of the hands of my honourable friend the member for the Border Boroughs (Mr Trevelyan), and has not only become a part of the settled policy of the Government, but will occupy a prominent position in the programme with which they will go to the country. The Vice-President of the Council has told us that he wishes it to be understood that in voting for the bill he votes for it as a private member, and not as a member of the Government. The Prime Minister in the message which he has addressed to us—and I would be the last to object to his having written a letter when he is prevented by illness from

[1] In the course of the debate, Mr Forster announced his intention of voting for the bill, and at the close of his speech he read a letter from Mr Gladstone stating that he should also have voted for the bill had he not been prevented attending the House by illness.

attending the debate—evidently wishes us to believe that he supports the bill as member for Greenwich, and not as Prime Minister of England. It is impossible for the Prime Minister and one of his most influential colleagues to vote on such a question as this as ordinary members of Parliament. In supporting the bill, they will vote for it as members of the Government, and henceforward it will become a Government measure. I need scarcely say that I rejoice at this result, for I seconded the motion of Mr Trevelyan when he brought the subject before the House last year. His speech has so exhaustively stated the arguments in favour of the principle of his bill that I would not trouble the House with any observations of my own on the present occasion, were I not anxious to point out the different position the bill occupies when in the hands of a private member, and when it has been adopted as a part of the Government programme. As long as it occupied the former position we were simply asked to express an opinion on the abstract question whether or not household suffrage ought to be extended to the counties, but when the bill is taken up by the Government, it becomes a part of another great measure of representative reform. Within the last few hours a significant and memorable change has come over the aspect of English politics. A new Reform Bill is imminent, and it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of losing no time in considering what the principles of this new Reform Bill should be. With regard to the question of extending household suffrage to the counties, I will simply say that the arguments in favour of such an extension appear to

me to be perfectly conclusive. When the right honourable gentleman the member for Bucks (Mr Disraeli) by a series of the most ingenious manœuvres led his party up to the acceptance of household suffrage in the boroughs, he probably knew better than any one else in the House that he had destroyed every argument in favour of stopping there, and that household suffrage in the counties was simply a question of a few years. I am anxious to avoid entering into any invidious comparison of the character of the working classes in town and country. But it is not simply a question between the town and country labourer. If a town artisan by the exercise of industry and frugality is enabled to live in a somewhat better house a few miles outside the town, can any thing be more indefensible than that by doing so he should lose his vote? In securing a healthier and better home for his family he surely does nothing which can suggest the slightest shadow of reason for depriving him of the franchise. Mr Trevelyan in one portion of his speech has admitted that if household suffrage is conceded to the counties, the 40*s.* freehold qualification is a question which must be dealt with. When speaking on this subject last year, I thought it desirable to point out that if there is the same household qualification in counties and boroughs, it is difficult to suggest any valid argument why the 40*s.* freehold qualification should be maintained in its present form. It may of course be urged that the 40*s.* freehold qualification provides some compensation for the existence of a higher household qualification in counties. But if the household qualification in counties and

boroughs is made precisely the same, why should a householder in the borough of Brighton, for instance, by the expenditure of £100 be able to obtain a vote for the county of Sussex, whilst a resident in Sussex cannot possibly obtain a vote for Brighton? The county freehold qualification has no doubt many historical associations connected with it, and it would have been most unwise to have abolished it as long as a high residential qualification in counties was maintained. But with household suffrage and a lodger franchise, almost every resident freeholder would have a vote from his residential qualification, and I cannot help believing that nothing but good would result if the present system of giving votes to non-resident freeholders were discontinued. Many most serious abuses are no doubt connected with it. The creation of faggot votes leads to many of the most demoralizing forms of electioneering. Rival agents vie with each other in resorting to all kinds of artifices to create these faggot votes. Again these votes are to a great extent responsible for the increasing and alarming costliness of county elections. The non-resident voters, being scattered far and wide, are brought to the poll at an enormous expense to the unfortunate candidate. Not only are their travelling expenses paid, but all the elaborate paraphernalia of agencies and committees is brought into existence with lavish expense to canvass these non-resident voters and to secure their presence at the poll. Again, it certainly appears to me to be singularly unjust that a man by the expenditure of £100 —the money often being not really his own but covertly supplied to him by some political association—should

be able to vote for a county with which he has not the slightest connection, and in which, perhaps, he does not spend a single hour from one election to the other. But I will not now pursue the subject further, as my chief object on the present occasion is not to speak of the details of the bill which is now before us, but I am chiefly anxious to consider the position of Her Majesty's Government in reference to the question. After what has occurred this afternoon the important issue which is now placed before us to determine is simply this: Are we going to sanction a further great extension of the suffrage without obtaining from the Government a definite statement as to the principles which they propose should regulate the redistribution of political power? In 1867 we committed that mistake. The majority of this House voted for an extension of the suffrage, accepting with unfortunate credulity the assurance that the reduction of the suffrage should be followed by a comprehensive measure for the redistribution of seats. We all know how the promise then given has been fulfilled. The extent to which the suffrage was then reduced more than realized the anticipations of the most advanced politicians, but scarcely anything at all was done to redress the inequalities and anomalies in the distribution of political power. Let us be warned in time, and not repeat the mistake which was then committed. I cannot help saying that the conduct of the Government at the present time at any rate suggests the necessity of our being very cautious and very watchful. Long before I had any idea of what the Government was going to do this afternoon,

I gave notice of a motion for a Commission to inquire into the best mode of redressing the present inequalities in the distribution of electoral power. After trying in vain for many weeks to bring the motion on for discussion, I was fortunate enough, as I thought at the time, to secure the first place for it last evening. The Government suddenly decided, a few days since, to appropriate last evening to their own business, and thus rendered it perfectly impossible for me to get my motion discussed during the present session. But this was not all. The Prime Minister adopted the unusual course of not only preventing the motion coming on, but of announcing beforehand his determined opposition to it. Can there be a more conclusive proof that the Government will do all in its power to resist any attempt which may be made to reopen the question of the redistribution of political power? And now I will earnestly ask the House to consider the conduct assumed by the Government with regard to this branch of the great subject of electoral reform, and then contrast it with what has happened this afternoon. The Government, far from endeavouring to get rid of the bill we are now considering by appropriating to their own business the day for which it was fixed, is apparently above all things anxious to make the country understand that they are eager to grant the great extension of the suffrage proposed by this bill. What, then, is the situation in which we are landed? Why is it not made perfectly clear to us that if the Government has its own way, that will again occur which happened in 1867? We shall have another great lowering of the suffrage without any attempt being made to place the

distribution of political power on a more just and satisfactory basis. This being the case, I think it is only fair to the Government at once most emphatically to tell them, that if they introduce a bill for the extension of the suffrage in counties, I will not vote for it unless the Government declares the principles to which they propose to give effect in reference to the redistribution of political power. It should never be forgotten that there are two ways by which people can be deprived of representation—one, by keeping the right of voting from them, another, by placing them in so hopeless a minority that, virtually, they must be without representation. When the subject is regarded from this point of view, it is evident that a bill for the extension of the suffrage may be a disfranchising as well as an enfranchising measure, if it concentrates greater power in the majority, and if we continue a representative system which confines political power solely to local majorities. I am not less anxious now than I always have been to give to manual labour all the power to which it is legitimately entitled. Manual labourers being a majority in the country, they ought to be able to secure a majority in this House. But I am not prepared to place the entire machinery of political power in their hands, without at the same time providing some securities that those who are not manual labourers, and who hold different opinions from theirs, should have some chance of representation in the House of Commons. Those who in this country hold advanced opinions are prone to turn to the United States for political guidance, and if we do turn to the United States, we shall find that politicians there

of the highest character and of the highest intelligence almost unanimously agree that the future of their country in no small degree depends upon the recognition and practical adoption of just principles of representation. They are beginning to perceive that a country may have the most democratic suffrage in the world, but if securities are not taken for the representation of minorities, that democratic suffrage, by centring unchecked power in the hands of a majority, would bring into existence many of the worst evils of an oligarchy. They are also beginning to recognise the all-important fact that true democracy consists in securing, as far as possible, the representation of all, and not simply the representation of the majority, and that if the most intelligent sections of opinion are unable to obtain representation, many of the best men in the country will gradually draw themselves away from political life, and the tone and character of the representative assembly steadily and surely will become deteriorated. All, however, that I am now saying in reference to the United States can be verified by what has lately taken place in Illinois, which is justly looked upon as one of the most progressive States in the Union. About three years since the principle of minority representation was introduced into Illinois, by the adoption of a plan of cumulative voting somewhat different from that which has been applied to our own School Board elections. The plan has been so eminently successful that Ohio and other States seem to be on the point of following the example of Illinois. The success of the plan can, however, be best described in the words of Mr Medill, the mayor of Chicago, who,

be it remembered, is not a *doctrinaire*, as the advocates of minority representation in our own country are usually supposed to be, but who has won so high a position as a shrewd man of business and a practical politician, that when the terrible fire took place at Chicago, all parties united in selecting him as the one man likely to be the "wisest,"—I quote from an American authority—"purest, and firmest candidate for the office of mayor." Mr Medill says that the system of minority representation which has been introduced into Illinois works to the entire satisfaction of the people, and "is regarded as a great improvement on the old one-sided system of representation." He also says, the voters "will be slow to yield back the cumulative vote or totality representation. The whole mass of the people are now represented in the popular branch, instead of a majority as formerly..... The stronger party at the polls have control of the House, but the weaker one is represented in proportion to its strength." He then observes that "it is a noticeable fact that, taken as a whole, the so-called 'minority members' were the ablest men. Several of the strongest and most conspicuous members were sent to the Assembly by the 'plumping vote' of the minority, shewing that the weaker party, as a rule, were more careful and conscientious in making selections of representatives than the majority side." Mr Medill concludes with these very significant words: the only opponents the new system now has "in Illinois are of the Bourbon breed, who forget nothing and learn nothing, or the clan of Court-house partisans, who believe in disfranchising their political opponents from

motives of unscrupulous selfishness and narrow-minded illiberality." I hope to be able at some future time to revert to this subject, but I have thought it advisable on the present occasion to make these remarks, in order to indicate to the Government why some of us at least will be prepared to say that, when a bill is introduced by the responsible Ministers of the Crown for carrying out so great an extension of the suffrage as we are now asked to sanction, they will be expected at the same time to consider the question of a redistribution of political power, and distinctly to let the country know by what principles that redistribution shall be regulated. We have this afternoon started upon a new era of representative reform. It cannot therefore be too earnestly insisted upon that whilst, on the one hand, we should endeavour to enfranchise all who are qualified to vote, we should, on the other hand, not less earnestly strive to make the English Parliament a truly representative assembly, in which every section of opinion should be duly and proportionally represented by those who are most able and most independent.

IRISH UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT.

DURING four or five successive sessions since the year 1867 I brought in various forms the question of Irish University Education before the House. A resolution was on several occasions moved affirming the desirability of abolishing all religious tests in Trinity College and the University of Dublin. The first time there was a division on the resolution (1867) the numbers for and against it were equal, and the Speaker, according to precedent, gave his casting vote against the resolution. On this occasion Mr Gladstone abstained from taking any part in the division. The next year, being the eve of the general election, each party was anxious to gain the Catholic vote, without raising Protestant suspicion. The day when the resolution was to have been brought forward, the House was counted out before the discussion began, at four o'clock on a Tuesday afternoon. It was said at the time that there were no fewer than 170 members within the precincts of the House, but the Whips on each side had sufficient influence to prevent the formation of a House. This proceeding was characterised by a high authority as a piece of strategy happily without precedent in the annals of Parliament. When the resolution was again brought forward in 1870, Mr Gladstone, who was then Prime Minister, threatened to treat its passing as a vote of want of confidence, on the ground that he had promised to legislate on the subject himself, and that the resolution indicated an imperfect scheme of reform, it being in his opinion necessary to associate with the abolition of tests a scheme for the reorganization and reform of Trinity College and the University of Dublin. On this occasion a petition in favour of the resolution was presented from the authorities of Trinity College and the University. Before the disestablishment of the Irish Church they had been in favour of the retention of religious tests, but after disestablishment they felt that there was no justification for attempting to maintain the principle of Protestant ascendency in academic institutions in Ireland. In 1871 a bill of which I had charge, and which also bore the names of Mr Plunket (one of the members for Dublin University), Dr Lyon Playfair, and Lord Crichton, was brought forward. This bill proposed not only to abolish all religious tests, but, in order to meet Mr Gladstone's objection previously referred to, it also

proposed to reorganize Trinity College and the University of Dublin, and to vest the powers now exercised by the Provost and the seven senior Fellows in a new representative Council, to seats on which members of all religious persuasions would have been eligible; in order to facilitate the immediate representation of Catholics on this Council the principle of cumulative voting was introduced. The tactics of delay and obstruction were once more resorted to; a division on the second reading of the bill was avoided by talking it out on a Wednesday afternoon. This proceeding, if not arranged by the Government, certainly had their sanction, for the talk out was effected mainly through the instrumentality of their Irish Attorney-General, Mr Dowse. In 1872 the same bill was again introduced, the same members having their names on the back of it. The Government supported the second reading, and it was carried by a majority of four to one. Not long afterwards the Irish Secretary (the Marquis of Hartington) gave notice of his intention to move on behalf of the Government an instruction to the committee that only that portion of the bill which referred to the abolition of tests should be proceeded with, and that all the remainder, relating to the reorganization of the Government of Trinity College and the University, should be abandoned. The committee on the bill was fixed for a Tuesday in April, and on the previous day an article, obviously inspired, appeared in the *Daily News*, in which it was stated that the Government would resign if Lord Hartington's instruction were defeated. The position of the bill was of course entirely altered by this sudden creation of a ministerial crisis; it virtually destroyed all chance of the bill coming on for committee on Tuesday evening. Accordingly at the meeting of the House on Wednesday I asked Mr Gladstone whether he intended to give a day for the discussion of a motion which, according to the interpretation of the Government, involved a vote of confidence in his administration. On receiving a reply in the negative, I at once gave notice that I would on the next day call the attention of the House to the conduct of the Government; this I was enabled to do by formally moving the adjournment of the House. It is unnecessary to make any further reference to the ministerial crisis, as the circumstances connected with it are explained in the first of the three following speeches on Irish University Education. The tactics of the Government were successful, for it was soon proved that the threat of resignation had effectually destroyed all chance of bringing on the bill during that session. In the following year, 1873, Irish University Education occupied a first place in the ministerial programme. The bill of the Government was introduced by Mr Gladstone a few days after the opening of Parliament, and the second reading was fixed for an early day in March. Unless a private member introduces a bill on the earliest possible day of the session he has no chance of getting it discussed at a convenient time. I therefore thought it expedient once more to introduce the bill of which I had charge. The promoters of the measure thought that if the bill of the Government should prove a satisfactory solution of the question we could withdraw our bill: on the other hand, we should be in a position to proceed with it if the scheme of the

Government should be rejected. When the day for the second reading of the Government bill came on, it was opposed by a resolution, moved by Mr Bourke and seconded by Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, calling upon the Government to give a list of the names of the members of the proposed council of the new University. The debate on the second reading lasted four nights; and as it proceeded the opponents of the ministerial scheme urged so many objections against it that Mr Bourke's resolution was withdrawn in order that a division might be taken on the second reading. The result of the division was that the bill was rejected by a majority of three. The Government resigned; but Mr Disraeli declining to form a Government, they soon returned to office. Soon after this, I ascertained that the Government were willing to facilitate the passing of my bill, if those who had charge of it consented to abandon the clauses relating to the reorganization of the college and University, thus making the bill simply a measure for the abolition of religious tests. For the reasons stated in the last of the three following speeches this offer was accepted; the bill quickly passed all its stages in the House of Commons; it was introduced by Lord Cairns into the House of Lords, where it met with no opposition, and received the Royal Assent early in June. It may be well to state that by this bill tests have been much more completely abolished at Trinity College and the University of Dublin than they have been at Oxford and Cambridge. At the English Universities clerical tests are retained, and nearly all the headships and a considerable number of fellowships must still be held by clergymen of the Church of England. In Dublin no religious disability whatever attaches to the Provostship or to any of the fellowships.

IRISH UNIVERSITY EDUCATION. I.

THE MINISTERIAL CRISIS, 1872.

I CAN say with all sincerity, that there is no one in this House who can more regret than I do that any act of mine should tend to interfere with the course of public business. But I think, if honourable members will listen to a very brief statement of what has recently occurred, they will think I am amply justified in pursuing my present course. The promoters of the Dublin University Bill are not in the slightest degree responsible for the present position of affairs. Up to Friday last that bill occupied in every respect identically the same position as any other measure introduced by a private member. We had no claim for exceptional treatment, and we could not with the slightest shew of reason have pressed the members of the Government to give us a night for its consideration. We must have taken our chance with other members. We should, no doubt, have done our best to press it forward, and if we had not succeeded in bringing it on, reluctant though we should have been to drop the bill, there would have been no other course open to us but to submit to our fate. But suddenly the whole aspect of affairs was changed,

and the Government, without any warning to the promoters of this bill or notice to this House, have adopted a course which is happily without precedent in the political annals of this country. Last year I introduced the same bill which is now before the House. It came on for discussion late in the session, and, in opposing it on the plea that the period was too late for its consideration, how was it met by the Government? The Prime Minister said:—"If this bill had been introduced, not at the end, but at the beginning of the session, it would have been our duty" —mark these words—"to introduce a measure of our own or else to support the bill." Well, this session arrived. No measure of the Government was forthcoming. No allusion to the question was made in the Queen's Speech. We again introduced the bill, and now we are told that we are trespassing upon the legitimate province of the Government. But that is not what we are doing. We are simply acting in strict accordance with the injunctions of the Government. We introduced this bill on the earliest possible day, and we fixed its second reading for the first day we could get. And when the day for the second reading arrived I thought that the goal for which I had been striving for five years had at length been reached; I thought that the Government could not escape from a clear and specific declaration of their views on the subject. But their resources of evading a clear and distinct issue on this question are inexhaustible. They supported the second reading of the bill, but with this reservation—not mentioned at the time—that half the bill was so objectionable that they

would not seek to amend it; that they would not seek to introduce new clauses; but that if it was pressed they would treat it as a vote of want of confidence. Where is there a parallel to such a proceeding? If it is to be drawn into a precedent, the result would be that the second reading would cease to be regarded as the most important vote in favour of a bill, but would be looked upon as a hollow pretext and an unmeaning sham. I am fully aware that the Government, in supporting the second reading of the bill, said that they objected to certain clauses. That is no uncommon thing, but I believe that never before did any Government or any party in this House support the second reading of a bill, and then turn round and say:—"If you won't take half of it away we regard it as so objectionable that we shall treat it as a vote of want of confidence." And now the Prime Minister, and every member of the Government and every man of fairness in this House, must be aware that it is impossible for us to accept the alternative offered to us by the Government. The Government proposes that we should split the bill into two. I stated distinctly before—

The SPEAKER.—I am unwilling to interrupt any honourable member of this House, but it is my duty to advise the honourable member for Brighton that he is now travelling beyond the point allowed by the rules of the House, inasmuch as he is now discussing the merits of a bill which stands as one of the Orders of the Day in the Order Book of the House.

Mr FAWCETT.—I shall endeavour, Sir, to obey

your ruling. I do not in the least degree wish to discuss the principles of the bill, but simply to refer to the course of procedure suggested by the Government. I think that in a few sentences you will see that I am not out of order. What did the Government ask us to do? They said:—"Cut your bill in two, and drop one portion." My simple answer is that it is absolutely impossible for us to do so. Suppose I had cut it in two, I should have exposed myself to the reproaches of honourable members who might have come forward and complained that I had broken faith with them, because I only proposed to press forward a part of what I had obtained their assent to on the second reading. It was absolutely imperative, therefore, before doing so that we should receive a release from the House. I went to the honourable gentleman (Mr Glyn), to whom communications affecting the Government are usually made, and said, "I do not wish to do anything in the least degree to obstruct the Government; I shall simply treat the instruction to be moved by Lord Hartington as a question of procedure, and shall speak for only two or three minutes upon it. If the House wishes the bill to be divided let it be divided; the House then releases us from any obligation to proceed with the whole bill; if, however, the House wishes the bill to be proceeded with as a whole, I shall deem myself bound in honour to persevere with it in that form." No one can say this was other than behaving in a conciliatory manner towards the Government. But the strongest point of my case is this. It seems to me that the course of proceeding taken by the Go-

vernment is absolutely fatal to the privileges of private members, for if it is to be used as a precedent it destroys for once and for ever all chance of private members legislating upon any subject. In what position are we placed by the conduct of the Government? If they had not treated this measure as a vote of want of confidence we should have had a fair chance of bringing on the bill. Having carried the second reading by an overwhelming majority, we should very probably have been able to get the bill into Committee even as late as half-past eleven or twelve. We should, therefore, have had some chance of getting the bill through. But the Government have now effectually destroyed every vestige of a chance we had of passing the bill. This assertion can be supported by three reasons. In the first place, it would have been perfectly legitimate, and in accordance with the usages of this House, to bring the bill on as late as twelve at night if it did not involve the existence of a Government: but would it not be preposterous to commence a debate involving a ministerial crisis at half-past eleven or twelve, with the knowledge that the debate would be inevitably adjourned, and that the Government would refuse to give a night for resuming it? The second point is equally strong. Before this measure was treated as one affecting the fate of the administration the great bulk of honourable members on each side were anxious to press it on. This was shewn on the division for the second reading; and honourable members having motions would have assisted us by postponing them. But now every honourable member who does not wish to see a ministerial crisis,

instead of being anxious to press the bill forward, is anxious to do all in his power to prevent it coming on. We have, therefore, not one chance out of ten which we had before of getting the bill forward. The third point is that, before the Government treated proceeding with this bill as a question involving confidence, they knew perfectly well that three-fourths of the honourable members who sit on this side of the House were strongly in favour of the bill. There was only one English Liberal member, and not a single Scotch member, who voted against it on the second reading; but on Monday night, after the Government issued their threat, honourable member after honourable member came to importune me to give way. I am divulging no private confidence; what has occurred is notorious. That was the intention of the move. Honourable member after honourable member came to me and said, "We concur entirely in your Dublin University Bill; we agree with every clause of it. There are few measures we would rather see passed, but when it comes to a question of turning out a Government can you expect us to prefer Dublin University to a Liberal Government? Dublin University may go to"—I won't describe where. We are not going to be unreasonable. We don't think we have been. We fully recognize the right of the Government to treat whatever question they please as one involving a vote of confidence in their administration. It is for them to decide what implies confidence and what does not; but what we maintain is this, and we believe the sympathy of the country will be with us, that if the Government raise an issue of confidence

upon a particular measure, they are pursuing a line of policy which, to say the least, is not characterized by courage or by fairness, if they refuse to give those against whom this issue of confidence is raised, an opportunity of trying it. The Government virtually prevent us coming on with our bill, they interpose in our way what amounts to a ministerial crisis, and then having entirely altered the character of our position, they absolutely refuse to give us an opportunity of discussing the measure. If there is one thing the English people appreciate more than another, it is fighting in a fair and open way. If the Government persist in refusing to accept our challenge, the verdict of the common sense English people will be that they are dismayed and abashed. Why do they shrink from this contest? They have enormous odds on their side. We cannot bring to bear a threat of resignation; we cannot bring to bear a threat of dissolution. But this is only the coping stone of what has been going on for many years. What has been done upon this question? For five years we have been trying to obtain a decision upon it. Twice our proposals have been talked out. Twice they have been counted out. Twice they have been got rid of by threats of ministerial resignation. ("No, no.") It is perfectly true. And numberless as have been the speeches from the Treasury bench, it is absolutely impossible to extract from them anything like a clear declaration as to the meaning of Ministers upon this subject. What, then, will the nation conclude from all this? That the Government in using these tactics to prevent discussion—for that is what it amounts to—do so either

because they have no policy to avow, or because they are afraid to let the bulk of the nation know what that policy is. We are asked, "Why don't you postpone the measure until next year? You are impatient; let the Government legislate upon the question." What security have we for that? Are not the Government already pledged sufficiently? Have they not undertaken to legislate upon five times more subjects than they can possibly settle. How many questions has the Home Secretary (Mr Bruce) under his serious consideration? No one is more fully prepared than I am to acknowledge the marvellous industry of the Prime Minister, but he must admit that after the division taken last week upon the motion of the honourable baronet (Sir M. Lopes), the whole question of local taxation and local government must be taken up next session by the Government. And when we are asked to postpone our bill, cannot we get instructive warning from the past? What happened three years since? I hope the House will allow me to give this instance, which is an exactly parallel case. When the honourable member for East Surrey (Mr Locke King) was nearly on the point of carrying his Intestacy Bill, he, in a fatal moment, gave it up to the Government. Where is that bill? Echo answers, "Where?" Do you expect to find it? You might as well look for grapes on thorns or figs on thistles. Suppose we, in the same confiding spirit, give up this question to the Government. What security shall we have that it will be dealt with?

Now, apologising for having detained the House so long, I shall, in conclusion, endeavour to clear myself

from one charge almost of a personal character. It has been said that I am guilty of presumption in attempting to legislate upon the great and difficult subject of Irish University education. Happily I can clear myself effectually from that charge without the slightest egotism. If honourable members opposite were asked who are the two honourable members among them most capable of dealing with the subject of Irish education, in whose favour would their verdict be given? There can be no doubt that their verdict would be given in favour of the two members representing the University of Dublin (Dr Ball and Mr Plunket). If, turning to this side of the House, the Liberal members were appealed to and asked to name the man who from his University experience, from his great ability, from his position in this House, from his representing a University constituency, is best qualified to deal with the subject of University education, should we not all say it was my honourable friend the member for the University of Edinburgh (Dr Playfair)? Therefore, I leave myself out of the question, and I say, "Don't look on it as my bill; look on it as the bill of those two honourable members on the Conservative side of the House and of that honourable member on the Liberal benches, who are best fitted to deal with the subject." And if we have introduced a bill which, before that threat of resignation, obtained an almost unanimous support in this House, why are we to be deprived of all chance of legislating? Why are we not to have the same chance as other members—and we ask no more—in passing this bill? I am anxious to state that I wish to adopt

the course which will be the most convenient to the House. We are ready to go on with the bill to-morrow or the next day; but if the Government object we don't want unduly to press them. If they will promise to give us a day, so that if we get into Committee we may have a reasonable chance of passing the bill, the promoters of the measure will be perfectly satisfied; and we shall be quite content if the Government gives us a day before the middle of June. That does not seem a very unreasonable proposal. But what we do object to is this, that the Prime Minister yesterday—I have no doubt unintentionally—gave us an answer which leaves us in a worse dilemma than ever. We do not know whether the Government are going to give us a day or not. We do not know, therefore, whether to try to bring the bill on upon a private member's night, or to rely on the promise of the Government. I am inclined to think that the promise of the Prime Minister is worse than useless. I would be the last man in the House to think of saying that the Prime Minister would not fulfil any promise which he made; but he candidly and particularly warned me against taking his promise to imply the possibility of the Government giving an early day. What conclusion am I to draw from that? If there be little or no probability of our getting an early day, what shall we find if we rely on this promise of the Government? We may find that we have for the consideration of this measure the fag-end of a morning sitting in the dog-days, and that we are placed in the same position as we were last year, the Government again using against us the argument that it is absurd to go on with the bill so late in the session.

In conclusion, I will say that for five years we have persevered with this question. We have fought it through many vicissitudes; it has suffered many reverses; it has seen many misfortunes. We have at last advanced it to a position which we will not willingly surrender. What we have done in the past we shall do in the future. We feel that the object we have in view in proposing this measure is to promote the great cause of intellectual freedom, of liberal learning, and of high culture. Whatever may be the result, whether it involve a ministerial resignation or not, the issues we are striving for are of infinitely greater moment than any mere temporary party triumph; and we who have charge of the bill give this pledge to the House, that we will continue to do all in our power to press this question on for solution, and, if possible, to extract from the Government a definite, distinct, and intelligible enunciation of their views.

IRISH UNIVERSITY EDUCATION. II.

THE SECOND READING OF THE GOVERNMENT BILL. MARCH, 1873.

IF the bill we are now asked to read a second time should be rejected, its defeat will constitute perhaps the most striking homage ever offered to the eloquence of a statesman. If we had been asked to express an opinion upon the measure at the conclusion of the speech which introduced it, we should undoubtedly have given an almost unanimous opinion in favour of the second reading. We were so charmed and dazzled by the eloquence of the Prime Minister that no one thought of criticising the details of his scheme. But experience has taught us, and never more forcibly than on the present occasion, that it is impossible to judge of a measure simply by the speech of the minister who introduces it. Hearing from the Prime Minister that the great object he had in view in bringing forward the bill was to promote the advancement of learning in Ireland, I endeavoured to study the measure from this point of view, and in doing so I had the advantage of being assisted by many men of distinguished academic position, who are

most competent to form an opinion upon its probable influence on the advancement of learning and on University teaching. I was anxious not to be betrayed either into premature approval or premature condemnation. It was evident that the Prime Minister had bestowed so much labour and so much thought on the measure, that it was only due to him that his proposals should receive a corresponding amount of careful attention. I have therefore, with the assistance of the friends to whom I have alluded, endeavoured to study the bill as closely as I could, and with the permission of the House I will as briefly and candidly as possible lay the result before them. It will be in the recollection of honourable members that a great portion of the speech of the Prime Minister was devoted to proving that University education in Ireland is not in a satisfactory condition, and that a certain class in that country are suffering under a grievance. Both of these propositions are cordially endorsed, at least on this side of the House. It would be strange indeed, if they were not accepted by myself and those about me who have striven for six years, against every obstacle that can be placed in the path of independent members, to force this question upon the attention of Parliament and the consideration of the Government. We admit that University education in Ireland is not in a satisfactory condition, and that a class in that country are suffering under a grievance. But, admitting the existence of the grievance—although we give to it a very different interpretation from that given to it by the Prime Minister—the question we have to consider is:—Will the present measure remove that grievance?

Without doubting the good intentions or the perfect sincerity of the Prime Minister, I think I can prove that the present measure will make the condition of University education in Ireland not more satisfactory, but more unsatisfactory; that it will introduce worse evils than it will cure; and that it will utterly fail to touch the grievance as stated and understood by the Prime Minister himself. Never has a measure been rejected with so much unanimity. The very class for whose benefit it is devised are the first to repudiate it. I may be told that the merits of the measure are shewn by the fact that it satisfies the extremes of neither party. But can it be proved that even moderate men in Ireland are satisfied with it? The reason of this general dissatisfaction can be easily understood. No principle is consistently carried out in the bill. It is just one of those compromises on the give-and-take principle, which are intended to please everybody and end by pleasing nobody. The Catholic prelates who have condemned it in such uncompromising terms have been accused of being illogical, inconsistent, and ungrateful. Without, however, in the least agreeing in their views, I am bound to say that these prelates have always told us what they want with perfect straightforwardness. It is not they, but the Government, who have been illogical and inconsistent; for, according to the speech of the Prime Minister, and, what is more important, according to the provisions of his bill, the Government virtually acknowledge the justice of the demand of the Catholic prelates for an adequate and separate endowment of their educational institutions. Before dealing with this subject I will ask

the House to consider those portions of the bill which may be regarded as its accessories. First of all, it is proposed to abolish the Queen's University and the Queen's College at Galway. As to the abolition of the Queen's University, no one has asked for it; no academic reformer approves it; on the contrary, every one's opinion is against it, and the whole experience of every other country is antagonistic to such a proposal. In countries where University education is most prosperous, where it does the most to form national character and develop the best national qualities, there are to be found not one but several Universities. On the other hand, in countries where education has most declined, this unfortunate plan of centralization has been adopted. If we wish to point to countries where University education is most thriving we should select Germany with its 20 Universities, and Scotland, a small country, with its four Universities. Now Scotch members are generally shrewd enough to take care of their own interests; but if they are induced to vote for this centralizing policy in University education, where will their four Universities be, in ten years' time? They will be amalgamated into a Central Board, the creature of political nomination, with a political officer presiding over it—possibly the Lord Advocate. France has only one University, and every writer on the subject regrets that it has not more. Belgium is in much the same position, and a high authority (M. Emile de Lavaleye) has said this system of centralization "causes the professors to conform to an uniform standard, and by degrees it stifles initiative and the genuine spirit of research." The proposal to abolish the Queen's

University is indefensible from every point of view. It would destroy wholesome competition. Cambridge would not be in so satisfactory a position were it not for Oxford and London; and the converse holds true with regard to Oxford and London. But indefensible as would be the abolition of the Queen's University, the proposal to abolish Queen's College, Galway, is more indefensible still. I cannot help repeating the complaint of Lord E. Fitzmaurice that the Prime Minister, in describing Galway College, did not quote the figures of the last year, which happens to be one of the most prosperous years in its existence. No one can doubt that at the present moment Galway is doing excellent work, considering the unfavourable circumstances in which it is placed. It is not resorted to by the sons of the wealthy; those who frequent it are chiefly the sons of small farmers and poor tradesmen. But considering the number of students turned out by this college in the remote west of Ireland; considering their position at the present moment—high up in the English and the Indian Civil Services, pursuing honourable professional careers, or even sitting on the judicial bench—what would their position have been had not this college existed? Can the House for one moment think of sanctioning this objectionable proposal? Nothing in the Prime Minister's speech do I regret so much as the manner in which he estimated the cost of the students at Galway. In the first place there is a fallacy in his argument. He estimates the cost of each student in arts at £230; of each medical student at £180; and of each law student at over £300 per annum. But he arrives

at these results by considering that each professor's work is solely to be estimated by the number of students who proceed to degrees, and not by the number he teaches. (Mr Gladstone—"No, no.") I protest against the whole system of estimating the utility of a collegiate institution as an auctioneer, a salesman, or an appraiser would estimate the value of a parcel of goods or a bale of merchandise. We could have little expected such a mode of appraising educational results from a Prime Minister who, above all things, is distinguished for his high culture and his great scholarship. If the Prime Minister proceeds on this plan, where is he going to stop? If Galway College is to be abolished, why did the right honourable gentleman a few hours after he introduced his bill recommend her Majesty to fill up the chair of Pastoral Theology in his own University? The stipend of this professor bears at least a ten times larger proportion to the number of students he instructs, than does that of any of the professors of the Galway College. In the last academical year seventy-five students entered at Galway College, which has an income of £10,000 a year. At Magdalen College, Oxford, only twenty-five students matriculated, and its revenues are said to be £40,000 a year. The arithmetical argument therefore in favour of abolishing Magdalen College is twelve times as strong as it is in favour of abolishing Galway College. But take the very college of which the right honourable gentleman himself is so distinguished a member. The average matriculations at Christ-Church are seventy a year. This is about the number matriculating at Galway. But when we

compare the revenues of the two colleges, we find that Christ-Church is three times as wealthy as Galway. If, then, the arithmetical argument is pressed to a logical conclusion, the right honourable gentleman will arrive at some very awkward results. To prove the necessity of destroying Queen's College, Galway, the Prime Minister laid down the extraordinary doctrine that no one is to be considered an University student unless he is a student in arts; and he adds that every one would endorse this opinion. Now I emphatically deny the assertion, and most University authorities will confirm my statement. If the Premier's opinion is well founded, what becomes of the 4,000 Scotch students on whom he dwells with so much force? They are not all students in arts. As I am informed, at least one-half of them are professional students. University reformers at Oxford and Cambridge have been trying to establish other schools besides the schools of arts, yet Queen's College, Galway, is to be sacrificed, forsooth, because she has only so many students in arts! Accept this proposal of the Government, and Queen's College, Cork, is not worth a year's purchase. The arguments for its abolition are much stronger than those for the abolition of Queen's College, Galway. Taking as a test the number of students in arts, the number of those in Cork exceeds the number at Galway by 40 per cent., while the population of Cork exceeds that of Galway by 600 per cent. So that a stronger argument can be made out for the abolition of Queen's College, Cork, than for that of the college at Galway. The truth is that this proposal to abolish Queen's College, Galway, indicates

a settled determination on the part of the Government to disparage united education in Ireland, and ultimately to root it out of the land. The Prime Minister's argument was ingenious and elaborate, but when the House considers the circumstances of the country, the poverty of the people, the anathemas of the Church, and the threat of constant Parliamentary interference—instead of these colleges being a failure, their present position proves that a strong desire is really felt by the Irish people to participate in the advantages of united education. The figures quoted by the right honourable gentleman prove that up to 1865 these colleges were in a state of progress and that this progress was then suddenly arrested. Is this an accidental circumstance? In 1865 began the policy of denouncing these colleges. In 1865 Cardinal Cullen said that those parents and guardians who permitted their children to attend these colleges were unworthy of the sacraments of the Church, and should be excluded from them. Dr Derry, the Bishop of Clonfert, declared that those fathers and mothers who persisted in sending their children to receive this kind of education disregarded the warnings, entreaties, and decisions of the head of the Church, and that those who were guilty of such conduct should be deprived of the Eucharist and of the holy sacraments. Was a more cruel, cowardly, and inhuman denunciation ever uttered? Why, this bishop could not have used stronger language if these parents had been sending a daughter to prostitution, or a son to some sink of vice. These denunciations shew that Parliament can not completely carry out

the work of emancipation when it strikes off the fetters which prevent men from enjoying bodily freedom. This cruel and cowardly policy, I regret to say, has been aided and abetted by a Liberal Government. The period in question was that of threatened Parliamentary interference—the period of the Supplemental Charter to the Queen's University; when the Government only failed in their undertaking to destroy united education in Ireland, in consequence of the opposition of the House of Commons. This is strong language, and I should not use it myself. It is the language of that master of artistic description, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr Lowe). When these denunciations are hurled by the superior clergy, and the threat of Governmental interference is constantly repeated, is it surprising that these colleges should somewhat decline? It would have been a matter for no surprise if they had ceased to exist altogether. But the tide has turned, and the struggle that they have carried on with so much success against such unparalleled obstacles shews that the people of Ireland appreciate united education, and they will be slow to believe that the British Parliament will deprive them of this blessing and advantage. I now come to the main provisions of the bill. First, there is the Constitution of the Governing Council. The Prime Minister has quoted various precedents to shew that the House ought not to ask for the names of this Council. His precedents, however, have been satisfactorily disposed of. What is there in common between the appointment of four or five Boundary Commissioners and a governing body which is to

control the fortunes of a National University, and to which it is proposed to entrust powers never before given to any University or college that ever existed? The Prime Minister moreover is absolutely silent as to the principle on which the Council is to be constituted. Is he going to select men of the greatest academic experience, or is he about to adopt a principle fraught with especial mischief in Ireland, that this Council must necessarily represent, not academic learning, but religious opinion? Is it to contain a certain number of Protestants and a certain number of Roman Catholics? But there is a wider and more potent argument against this Council, and that is that it would be the creature of political nomination. The Prime Minister drew a parallel between this Council and the governing bodies at Oxford and Cambridge. But the difference between them is wide and marked. This Council, which is to be the creature of political nomination, will have to appoint professors, to prescribe the subjects of examination, to subject the professors to a sort of censorship, to frame a curriculum, to dispose of vast endowments, and to manage everything connected with the University. At Cambridge, and it is the same at Oxford, the Council, which is not politically nominated, but elected by resident members of the University, is not entrusted with a tithe of these powers. It is simply a Council of initiation. It does not appoint the professors, or increase their salaries, or change the curriculum, without obtaining the consent and sanction of the Senate of the University. The most extraordinary provision of the bill is that the Chancellor of the new University is to be

the Lord-Lieutenant, I wish for one moment to ask honourable members what they would think if it were proposed that the English Universities should be presided over by some one who, by the exigencies of party or by faithful voting, had been made Home Secretary or First Commissioner of Works. But then it may be said that the Lord-Lieutenant is not simply a political officer; he is also a Court official. Well, I wonder what would be thought at Oxford and Cambridge if it were proposed that they should have as their Chancellor the Lord-Chamberlain, the Controller of the Household, or a Goldstick in Waiting. The proposal is so preposterous that it would scarcely be necessary to refer to it, if it did not shew a settled determination running through the whole of the bill to fetter this new University, which the Government wishes to call into existence, in the degrading bonds of political subserviency. And this policy, forsooth, is to be tried in Ireland, as if every Minister responsible for this bill does not know that of all the things that have caused the misfortunes of Ireland, nothing has done so much to bring her unhappiness as the curse of political subserviency. Trinity College, Dublin, has been a place where honours and emoluments could be won without subservience to any political party, but henceforward it is to be subordinated to a political corporation. It is the more necessary to scrutinize the composition of the Council, and to force from the Government a declaration of the principle that is to regulate its Constitution, when we remember the extraordinary powers that are to be entrusted to it. There is to be no check on the number of the colleges that may be incorpo-

rated in the University; 20 Roman Catholic seminaries may be affiliated. There is no reason, indeed, why the Council should not also affiliate every Roman Catholic seminary in England and Scotland. But this is not all. This facility of affiliation will act as an instruction to the authorities of the various educational institutions to enter upon a rivalry of denominational zeal, in which the interests of higher education will be forgotten, in order to obtain the denominational majority on the Governing Council. I now come to still more extraordinary provisions. The Council will have to enforce a degrading censorship on professors; it will have to administer provisions which may be made to exclude from the University almost every branch of liberal learning; and it will have to give effect to regulations which, as I shall presently shew, may be so worked as to reduce every examination to a meaningless farce. Never before were such proposals brought forward by any Government, even in the most despotic country, as are contained in these clauses which exclude certain subjects from the University curriculum, and impose the most degrading censorship ever thought of upon the professors. If modern history and mental philosophy are excluded from the University, what is the University going to teach? Why even the teaching of the favourite language of the Prime Minister would be rendered a farce, as a professor would not be able to lecture on the most distinguished classical authors whose works refer to philosophical subjects. Last week, being at Cambridge, I gave a copy of the bill to a distinguished lecturer on Aristotle, and, without saying a word which

might bias his opinion, I asked him to read the gagging clauses and to state what would be the result if similar clauses were extended to his University. And here I would, in passing, remark that the rights of conscience are as sacred in England as in Ireland, and that if the rights of conscience in Ireland require this protection, they will soon require the same protection in Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow, St Andrew's, and Aberdeen. Well I gave the bill to the lecturer, saying, "Consider these clauses with regard to your lectures on Aristotle." His reply was, "If these clauses were extended to this University I could never give a lecture on Aristotle without incurring a risk of breaking the law." If the House will excuse me for quoting my own experience, I will add that it is absolutely impossible to lecture on Political Economy without referring to the events of modern history. Take up Adam Smith for example, glance over ten pages of that great author, and you will find that to teach Political Economy without referring to modern history makes the subject unintelligible. Again, the professors are to be subjected to the most degrading censorship ever dreamt of. By way of illustration I will again, with the permission of the House, refer to my own experience. Now, much as I value the position of a professor in the University of Cambridge, I should feel that I could not conscientiously hold my professorship for a single hour if the Prime Minister succeeded in introducing these clauses into the English Universities. I would not submit to the degradation of being subjected to such a censorship as is contained in this bill. I will suppose that a professor is lecturing on

pauperism. This he could not do without referring to the history of the Poor Law, and he could not treat of that subject without speaking of the indigence produced by the breaking up of the monastic institutions. If, however, he referred to monastic institutions, a student would perhaps write to him and say, "If you refer to them again, you will offend my religious convictions." Now, would any man submit to be called before a University Council—not created by the University, but the creature of political nomination—and to subject himself, without power of appeal, to suspension, or any other punishment the Council might devise? But this is not all. Examinations will, if this bill passes, be reduced to an absolute farce, because it is provided that "no student is to suffer any disadvantage for adopting in law, medicine, modern history, mental or moral philosophy, or any other branch of learning"—I wonder why the previous enumeration was made—"any theory in preference to any received theory." Of course, if there were any question which a student could not answer, he would say:—"I shall not answer that question, because I do not adopt that particular theory." For example, if a student were asked to prove the 47th proposition of the first book of Euclid, he might say:—"I cannot answer the question, because I do not adopt the theory that the square of the hypothenuse is equal to the sum of the squares described on the other two sides of a right-angled triangle." This clause will remain a monument of the vagaries of distinguished statesmen.

I will now again call attention to the gagging

clauses and I shall present them to the House from a very serious point of view. When I said to my honourable friends around me:—"Surely you are never going to pass a bill by which the teaching of modern history, and moral and mental philosophy, is prohibited, while a degrading censorship is imposed on teachers and examiners?" they all said:—"Oh, of course the Government will drop these clauses." Yes, of course they will have to drop them. But the Government can never repair the mischief which their proposal has inflicted on the future of Irish Education. Never, indeed, will there be a more striking exemplification of the saying, "The evil that men do lives after them." The House may reject this bill and may repudiate these clauses, but henceforward every priest who desires to cramp and fetter the mind will be able to say:—"This is not my opinion. I am not acting in obedience to orders from the Vatican. In telling you that you cannot go to an institution where modern history and philosophy are taught, I am not expressing my own opinion, but am simply giving effect to a policy which has received the sanction of an English Government and a Liberal Administration." Now, bearing this consideration in mind, it will not be difficult to shew that the bill, if carried, will prove fatal to united education, and can lead to no other conclusion than the endowment of denominational institutions in Ireland. Every one knows from the denunciations that have been uttered by bishops and priests in Ireland, what a terrible struggle those Irish parents and guardians have had to carry on who wish their sons to enjoy united education. The point I wish particularly to

impress on the House is that henceforward that struggle will, in consequence of these proposals of the Government, become infinitely more difficult; for each priest will now be able to say:—"You send your sons to Cork, to Galway, and to Trinity. In those institutions there are professorships of modern history and of moral and mental philosophy, but an English Government and a Liberal Cabinet have told you that the rights of conscience cannot be safe in institutions where those subjects are taught, and therefore you are bound to remove your sons from them." Thus in a few years the enemies of united education, having this weapon to work with, would be able to get almost every Catholic out of Trinity College and the Queen's Colleges. What will be the next inevitable step? It will be said, and said with truth, "Trinity College has an endowment of £50,000 a year, and the Queen's Colleges have an annual endowment of £10,000 each. In these institutions those subjects are taught which an English Government says cannot be taught if adequate protection is to be given to rights of conscience. Therefore you cannot safely entrust your children to them. You must come into our own institutions, which possess no endowments. Under these circumstances we have a claim to endowments, and that claim it will be impossible to resist." Let honourable members reflect for a moment on the consequences of destroying united education in Ireland. Is there any Catholic in this House who has been educated at Trinity College, Dublin, who will not bear me out when I say that he looks back on his college career with the utmost satisfaction, and is glad he has been brought into

contact with his Protestant fellow-countrymen? Are there, again, any Protestants in this House who would not regret to see Catholics excluded from Trinity College? Those Catholics and Protestants who are associated together in early life take a kindlier view of each other than they otherwise would, and look with a juster toleration on religious differences. Therefore, it is impossible to inflict a greater injury upon Ireland than to encourage a policy which would place a new and powerful weapon in the hands of the opponents of united education. The Prime Minister has rested his case on the fact that certain sections of the people of Ireland have a grievance in regard to higher education. I admit the existence of the grievance, but I think it calls for a remedy entirely different from that proposed by the Prime Minister. If, however, the right honourable gentleman had satisfied the grievance, I am bound to say we ought not to look too scrupulously into the provisions of the bill. But he has not satisfied the grievance; he has not satisfied a single class in Ireland. We have not the consolation that any section of opinion in Ireland would be rendered more contented, while it is certain that the bill contains principles which would produce the utmost mischief. Never before has a measure been condemned by so great a *consensus* of opinion. The Roman Catholic prelates have repudiated it. The Roman Catholic students in the Catholic University were the first to reject with indignation those safeguards for the protection of the conscience which have been introduced into it. The Senate of the University of Dublin—that institution which the House has been told is under such

galling thraldom to Trinity College—has united with the authorities of the College in protesting against the bill. The authorities of the Queen's Colleges, too, have strenuously objected to many of its provisions; while the Nationalists and Home-Rulers have said that the measure supplies a conclusive proof that an English Parliament is unfit to govern Ireland. I should, however, be sorry to overstate the case. The bill, after all, has not been unanimously rejected in Ireland. Magee College has petitioned in its favour. It appears to me that there cannot be a more conclusive proof of the unpopularity of the bill in Ireland than is afforded by the fact that the Prime Minister, in order to shew even the most minute modicum of approval of his measure, was reduced to the desperate strait of asking that the petition should be read by the Speaker. ("No, No.") Then the right honourable gentleman read it himself (A laugh and cries of "No," and "It was read by the Clerk at the table). Well, the clerk at the table was ordered to read a petition emanating from an institution in which the average entry of students is 1½ a year.

There are many other objections which I should like to urge against the bill, and I shall perhaps have an opportunity of doing so on some future occasion. But I wish, before I sit down, to guard myself against one reproach which, I understand, may be urged against me, and which has already been hinted at by my honourable friend the member for Tralee (The O'Donoghue). He seems to think that those who oppose this bill and who hold certain views with respect to University education in Ireland are the

victims of a "No Popery" mania. Now, that is an insinuation which we may with some confidence repudiate; for have we not always done what we could to admit Catholics to all the advantages of the English Universities, and to place them on an equality with every other member of the community? Roman Catholics are at the present moment unhappily excluded from many positions of honour and emolument in those Universities, but that is not my fault nor the fault of those with whom I act. It is not we but the present Government, who, by the retention of clerical fellowships, prevented the policy of perfect religious equality being carried out in the English Universities. As to this bill, there are no doubt many honourable members who, while they object to it, will vote for the second reading, in the hope that it may be amended in Committee. I wish, however, to point out to the House that there is a fashion growing up to treat the second reading of bills as a matter of no importance. But high as is the example set me, I am not going to do what was done last year on a similar occasion, when the Government supported the second reading of the Dublin University Tests Bill, the principle of which was afterwards found to be so objectionable that they checked all further progress of the bill by a threat of resignation. If the House votes for the second reading, it votes for the principle of the bill; and when what are called the gagging clauses come on for discussion in Committee, a member on the Treasury Bench may rise in his place and say:—"What, you are going to oppose these clauses, notwithstanding that you have voted

for the second reading, and thus endorsed the principle of the bill? We told you that this measure is intended to secure the rights of conscience." For my own part, I think there is in politics nothing like a clear and straightforward course. It may be said that entertaining the opinions I do, I ought not to be content with voting simply in favour of the resolution of the honourable member for King's Lynn (Mr Bourke), and that I ought to oppose the second reading. Well, I wish there had been a direct opposition to the second reading, instead of the resolution. But I approve of the resolution so far as it goes, and as it is the question before the House I shall vote for it. When, however, I have an opportunity, I shall act, I hope, consistently, and vote against the second reading. I trust at all events that the measure will be either accepted or rejected on its merits, and that the decision will not be influenced by collateral considerations. The House is well aware that the judgment of the most sagacious politicians is sometimes warped by rumours industriously circulated of a ministerial crisis. Well, what does a ministerial crisis mean? If such a crisis should arise, there would either be a resignation of the Government or a dissolution of Parliament. If there should be a resignation of the Government, nearly the same persons will soon return to office with principles somewhat reinvigorated and restored. If there is a dissolution, some members may not return to this House; but if it is their lot to be defeated, they will only be anticipating their fate by a few months. And would it not, I ask, be infinitely better never to return to this House than to sanction

a measure which would destroy an ancient and illustrious University, and set up in its place a corporation created by political nomination, which would impose on University teaching a censorship to which no man of independence would for one moment submit, and which would endorse the principle that the events of modern history and the ideas of some of our greatest thinkers cannot be expounded without suggesting the miserable suspicion that the object the teacher has in view is to promote some sectarian squabble, instead of developing the minds of his students and extending the range of thought? I beg to thank the House for the patience with which they have listened to me, and I have in conclusion only to express an earnest hope that a measure will not be allowed to pass into law which, so far as University education is concerned, would, in a country already unhappily disturbed and distracted, unsettle everything without settling anything, annihilate much that is good, and call into existence much that is bad, and would, above all, in the brief but memorable words of the students in the Catholic University "prove fatal to high culture."

IRISH UNIVERSITY EDUCATION. III.

SECOND READING OF THE DUBLIN UNIVERSITY TESTS BILL, APRIL, 1873.

IT has fallen to my lot to speak so often on the subject of this bill that it will not be necessary for me to occupy the time of the House more than a few minutes. I am anxious as far as possible to avoid all topics which could lead to recriminations about the past. I wish to secure the passing of the bill as speedily as possible; for there is a practical object to be gained by passing it before the end of next month. It is due to the House that I should state the exact position of the question at present, and how it has come to pass that the bill is different from the one I originally introduced, a portion of which has been abandoned. Three or four weeks ago it was intimated to those in charge of the bill that if they would abandon one portion of it—namely, that which proposed to constitute a Council, to which should be entrusted the future reorganization and management of Trinity College and the University of Dublin—the Government would facilitate the passing of the remainder of the measure, which is that relating to the abolition of

all religious tests. In deciding to accept this offer of the Government we were influenced by several considerations. It is hardly necessary for me to say that we abandoned a portion of the bill reluctantly; and we still retain the opinion that it would have been better if the whole bill had been passed. We were, however, met by these considerations:—In the first place, we knew perfectly well from the experience of last session that, if the Government did not assist us by giving us Government nights, it was absolutely impossible that there could be the smallest chance of the bill becoming law this session. For what happened last year? The second reading of a bill, more complete than the one now before the House, was carried by an overwhelming majority—a majority of four to one—before Easter. The promoters of the bill did everything that independent members could do to get it into Committee; but the Government objected to pass the bill as a whole; they therefore rendered us no assistance, and the result was that, although we availed ourselves of every opportunity, we were unable to get the bill forward. This being the case, we felt that if, on the present occasion, we preserved the bill intact, it would be almost certain not to pass this session, even although the second reading were carried by an overwhelming majority. On the other hand, we thought that if we accepted the offer of the Government, and confined the bill simply to an abolition of tests, it was almost certain that the measure would pass. We were also influenced by the consideration that we have always regarded the abolition of tests as the most important part of

the measure; and that the reorganization of Trinity College and the University of Dublin, the part of the question now left untouched, may possibly, as I shall presently shew, be settled at some future time without the direct intervention of Parliament. There is also another consideration by which we have been influenced. The abolition of tests is not simply desirable as a theoretical reform; but it is a reform of pressing and practical importance. Last year one of the most eminent students in Trinity College, Dublin, gained a fellowship which he was prevented from enjoying in consequence of the existence of those religious tests which this bill will abolish. Another fellowship examination is to be held at the beginning of next month; we therefore felt that if we did not accept the offer of the Government, it was quite possible that we might, by delaying the passing of this measure, be inflicting a great injury on a distinguished and deserving student. The second reading is to be met by two resolutions, brought forward by my honourable friends the members for County Galway and Tralee (Mr Mitchell Henry, and The O'Donoghue). Although I may not agree with the spirit or intention of either of these resolutions, they seem to me so entirely irrelevant to the bill that it is scarcely necessary to enter into any controversy with my honourable friends. The resolution of Mr Mitchell Henry affirms that, in order to settle the question of Irish University Education, it is necessary that a Royal Commission should be appointed to take evidence from academic bodies, and from those persons in Ireland who are most interested in the subject. Now, even if the necessity of such a

commission were admitted, there is not the slightest reason why Mr Mitchell Henry should withhold his support from the present bill; for surely he will agree with me that it does not require a Royal Commission to decide whether we shall apply to Ireland the same legislation that has been applied to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and abolish all religious tests in the University of Dublin. As to the resolution of The O'Donoghue, it is equally irrelevant to the present measure. Honourable members who cordially endorse every syllable of that resolution may, nevertheless, give an emphatic vote in favour of the bill. The O'Donoghue asks the House to declare that the abolition of religious tests will not settle the question of Irish University Education. But who thinks it would settle the question? The honourable gentleman cannot suppose Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that the passing of this bill will settle it. We have entered into no engagement and given no undertaking that the question shall not be re-opened. If the Government should desire again to enter upon the subject of Irish University Education they will be able to do so next session with as much readiness as if this bill had never been passed. As far as my own opinion and the opinions of my honourable friends who promote this bill are concerned, the best pledge we can give to The O'Donoghue that we do not consider the abolition of religious tests to be a settlement of the question of Irish University Education, is that we should not have abandoned a portion of our bill, if we had not been compelled to do so by the circumstances and necessities of the case. The

honourable member cannot hope to have a more satisfactory assurance that we do not regard the simple abolition of tests as a settlement of the question. With regard to what is likely to be the future of Irish University Education, it may possibly happen that the subject will not have to be dealt with in this Parliament, and who can venture to predict what the opinions of a new Parliament will be in reference to this question? Again, it may not improbably happen that, if the authorities of Trinity College and the University of Dublin act during next year with the same sagacity and liberality that have characterized their conduct since the disestablishment of the Irish Church, they may take the subject, to a great extent, out of the hands of this House. This they may do by preparing a set of statutes of their own, so liberal that the House of Commons may consider that the best thing to be done for the promotion of University education in Ireland would be to leave the question in the hands of a distinguished academic body, and simply to move a humble address to the Queen, praying Her Majesty to accept the statutes drawn up by the authorities of the College and University. I hope my Catholic friends in this House will believe me when I say, I am perfectly ready to admit that the Catholics in Ireland, and the residents in that country who are not members of the Protestant Episcopal Church, have suffered, and are suffering at the present time, a most serious grievance with regard to University education. If I had not felt this, why should I have striven during almost every year that I have been in Parliament to force this subject on the attention of the House? The

difference between my Catholic friends and myself is, not as to the existence of the grievance, but as to the remedy for it. I think that if we abolish all religious disabilities—if we do everything we can to efface the traces of past inequality, without infringing the principle of academic freedom and without introducing the principle of political nomination; if we lay a foundation which in future will give every Catholic and every Non-conformist in Ireland the same opportunity of obtaining honours and emoluments in regard to University education as is possessed by members of the Anglican Church; then we shall do all that can be done to secure educational equality. But my honourable friends the Catholic members in the House put a different interpretation on the grievance under which they say they are suffering, and they also suggest a different remedy. They say they will never enjoy justice as long as encouragement is given by means of endowments to the mixing together in educational institutions of Catholics, Protestants, and people of different religions. If this is their grievance, all I can say is that it probably admits of but one remedy—namely, the application to University education of the principle of concurrent endowment. Now in striving after concurrent endowment, the Catholic members of this House know far better than I can tell them that they are striving after what there is not the least chance of their obtaining. Considering what has recently occurred, can any reasonable man suppose that there is the slightest chance of concurrent endowment with regard to University education being conceded? Nothing could be more positive and emphatic

than the assurance of the Prime Minister in his memorable speech at the close of the debate on his Irish University bill. Much as that speech was admired, no portion of it gave such entire satisfaction to the whole body of the right honourable gentleman's English and Scotch supporters, as did the sentences in which he declared in language that could not be mistaken, that the day for concurrent endowment was gone for ever. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr Disraeli), in the speech he delivered the same evening, was not so emphatic and precise, but he let fall some doubtful phrases on the subject of concurrent endowment. What was the result? It is perfectly well known that alarm and dismay spread throughout the right honourable gentleman's ranks, and, in order not to be misunderstood, he took care, in a speech he made a few days afterwards, to prove to his party and to the country, that between himself and the Prime Minister there was not the slightest difference of opinion on the question of concurrent endowment. It is scarcely necessary for me to say more, except to express my thanks to the Government for having fulfilled their engagement to facilitate the passing of this bill, by affording us a convenient time for its discussion. I will now with confidence commend the measure to the favourable consideration of the House. If it becomes law, it will, I believe, introduce a great reform; it will remove a crying injustice; it will place Irish University Education in a more satisfactory position than it occupies at present; and it will clear the way for its future reform and development.

THE ENCLOSURE OF COMMONS.

SECOND READING OF THE ENCLOSURE LAW AMENDMENT BILL, APRIL, 1871.

PROBABLY no more serious accusation can be brought against Parliament than that it has habitually permitted the interests of the public and the poor to be ignored, whenever proposals have been brought forward for the enclosure of commons. Up to 1845 commons were enclosed by private bills. In this way during a century and a half 5,000,000 acres of land were enclosed; and, after a careful enquiry, a high authority, the late duke of Newcastle, declared that, in the case of these enclosures, the interests of the public and the poor had been in almost every instance most shamefully neglected. In 1845 the course of procedure was changed, for this House then assumed the responsibility of taking the enclosure of commons under its immediate control. But although the procedure was changed, there was no change in anything else; the same abuses continued to flourish as vigorously under the new as under the old system. I believe any impartial person must arrive at the conclusion that, in this matter, there is not a pin to choose between Liberal and Conservative Governments. Each

alike has apparently attempted to do everything in its power to facilitate the enclosure of commons, utterly disregarding the injury which such inclosures may inflict upon the people. There never was a worse Enclosure Bill brought forward than the one which was introduced two years since into the present Parliament. It would have enclosed 6,900 acres of land, and out of this large area there was only to be a beggarly reservation of 3 acres as recreation grounds for the public, and 6 acres as allotment gardens for the poor. When it is remembered that the present Liberal Government was placed in power by the enthusiasm of the newly enfranchised householders—when it is remembered that there are now sitting on the Treasury Bench advanced politicians who, when they were out of office, have on a hundred different platforms eloquently denounced the policy of divorcing the people from the soil,—when these things are remembered, it will be scarcely believed that this very Government and these enthusiastic asserters of popular rights strained every effort to force through Parliament that monstrous bill. When the bill had reached its third reading, I happened, almost accidentally, to discover what its contents really were. I may of course be fairly charged with negligence for not having made the discovery sooner. This I readily admit; in fact, there is nothing for which I more reproach myself than that I omitted, during the first few years I had a seat in this House, to scrutinize the Enclosure Bills which were annually introduced. I can now only say that I will endeavour by watchfulness in the future to make some amends for this negligence in the past. When

however, as I have previously said, I almost accidentally discovered, just as the bill was passing its third reading, that it proposed, out of 6,900 acres, to reserve only 9 acres for the use of the public and the poor, I thought it was only necessary to bring this fact under the notice of the Government, for some member on the Treasury Bench to rise in his place and say: "You never could have supposed that a Liberal Administration intended to pass such a bill as this; the exact nature of the proposal had entirely escaped our notice; in the pressure of public business we accepted the bill from the Enclosure Commissioners without adequate inquiry; we thank you for having pointed out to us the injustice which we were about unintentionally to commit, and we will at once withdraw the bill." Never were expectations doomed to more entire disappointment. I was evidently too inexperienced to estimate the full extent of the change which may come over men when bidding for popular support on the hustings, and when ensconced as officials in Downing Street. What took place when the third reading of the bill was objected to, is probably still in the recollection of the House. The late Under Secretary for the Home Department (Mr Knatchbull-Hugessen) at once rose, and scolded me for presuming to interfere with the passing of a Government measure. But as the bill had never been properly discussed, it had been hurried through its various stages in those small hours of the morning when so many things are done which will not bear the light of day, the House, happily, prevented the bill passing, and the Government was at length compelled to consent to the adjournment

of the debate, and, ultimately, to refer the bill to a Select Committee. Although the contest thus ended in what may be regarded as a drawn battle, yet it was by no means barren of results. The attention of the public had been sufficiently aroused to the importance of the question, so that the Government has been compelled to recognise the necessity of doing something in the matter. They accordingly introduced the bill which is now before the House for amending the Enclosure Act of 1845. Before I proceed to consider the provisions of this bill, I should like to make a few remarks on some of the consequences which have been produced by the enclosure of land. No one who has taken any trouble to investigate the subject can, I think, fail to arrive at the conclusion that the present unsatisfactory state of the agricultural labourers is in a great measure due to the manner in which the enclosure of land has been permitted to take place. Mr Kebbell, in a recent work on the agricultural labourer, has come to the conclusion that in the middle of the last century the rural labourer was better able to command the necessities of life than he now is; and this opinion is corroborated by almost every writer on political economy. As one of these writers remarks, labourers who once possessed proprietary rights in the soil are now deprived of them, and a class once independent has been gradually reduced to the position of dependent hirelings. It is of no use to repeat platitudes about agricultural prosperity, better cultivated land, increasing wealth, rising rents, and farms more sought after than ever, when, as a background to this glowing picture, we have a class

of labourers eking out a miserable existence on nine or ten shillings a week, sometimes living in houses which do not deserve the name of human habitations, their children in a state of ignorance which could not be greater if England had lost her Christianity and civilization, passing day after day uncheered by hope, with no other prospect before them than that, when they are no longer able to work, they will have to become supplicant mendicants for the pauper's dole. If wages have risen 15 per cent. in the rural districts during the last quarter of a century, the cost of articles of food consumed by the rural poor has increased 30 per cent, and increased facilities of communication have so equalized the price of food that living is now little cheaper in the rural districts than in the metropolis. Agricultural labourers now have great difficulty in obtaining milk; and the state of things I describe has been powerfully promoted by the enclosure of land; for formerly, close to almost every village, there was a common on which the labourer could keep a cow, poultry, or a pig. Referring now to the proposal before the House to amend the Existing Enclosure Act, I would gladly support it if I thought it would remedy the present state of things. The chief reason which induces me to think that it would not do so, is that everything would be left in the future, as it has been in the past, to the Enclosure Commissioners, whose conduct cannot be sufficiently condemned, as I believe hon. members will admit if they will listen to the few following facts. Wisley Common, in the neighbourhood of Weybridge, was one of the Commons proposed to be enclosed by the bill of 1869, to

which I have already referred. The common consists of 380 acres, and out of this entire area the Enclosure Commissioners only proposed to reserve two acres as a recreation ground for the public, and nothing as allotment gardens for the poor. It is not surprising that the House considered this proposal to be of so extraordinary a character, that it was deemed expedient to appoint a Select Committee to investigate this particular proposal. After listening to what the Commissioners had to say in justification of their conduct, and after receiving evidence from the neighbourhood, the committee decided that, if the Common was enclosed at all, the public recreation ground should be increased by 300 per cent.; and the poor, instead of having nothing for allotment gardens, as the Commissioners proposed, ought to have the utmost the act allows, namely, 10 acres. But bad as this case is, I will describe another, which will exhibit the conduct of the Commissioners in a still stronger light. In the same bill which proposed to enclose Wisley, and which, as we have seen, the Government exerted all their influence to pass, it was also proposed to enclose Witheypool Common, its area being no less than 1906 acres. Out of this extensive area the Enclosure Commissioners only reserved one miserable acre as a recreation ground for the public, and did not even suggest that a single foot of the land should be set aside as allotment gardens for the poor. In order that the House should adequately appreciate the motives and sentiments which have prompted the conduct of the Commissioners, I earnestly ask hon. members carefully to consider the following narrative. The Commissioner

to whom this particular enclosure was entrusted, on being asked by the Select Committee to give the reasons which had induced him to make such a paltry reservation for the public and the poor, made the following statement in justification of what he had done. In the first place, he asserted that a larger recreation ground would not be used; secondly, that the common was never resorted to by the inhabitants of the locality; thirdly, that there were numerous commons close to the common in question; and lastly, that it was impossible to allot more than one acre for a recreation ground, because the other portions of the common were too steep. Before accepting these statements, it was thought desirable that the opinion of the locality should, if possible, be ascertained. I accordingly suggested to the committee that the parish clerk and the parish schoolmaster would be suitable witnesses to summon. No member of the committee had, of course, the slightest idea of the evidence they were likely to give. What they did say, however, will well repay a careful perusal. In the most positive and emphatic terms they contradicted every statement which had been made by the Enclosure Commissioner. They asserted that a larger recreation ground would be greatly appreciated by the inhabitants. They gave the most explicit denial to the statement that the common was not largely resorted to by the people living in the locality. Instead of there being numerous other commons in the neighbourhood which could be used if this particular one were enclosed, they assured the committee that the nearest common was five miles distant, at the top of a very steep hill; and to dis-

prove the assertion that only one acre could be allotted as a recreation ground because the common was so steep, they produced maps from which it was shewn that immediately contiguous to this single acre there were eight acres in every respect equally well adapted for purposes of recreation. It cannot be necessary to say anything more in order to convince the House that it is impossible to feel any confidence that the Enclosure Commissioners will properly protect the interests of the public. It is sometimes urged in defence of these Commissioners that, previous to any enclosure, they hold a local inquiry, and that if any wrong is going to be done to the poor, that is the time when complaints ought to be made. It has, however, come out in evidence that these Commissioners, apparently influenced by a strange perversity, almost invariably hold these inquiries at half-past one o'clock in the day, the very time when the poor are at work in the fields and cannot possibly attend. No trouble is ever taken to make them understand that they have a right to make a complaint; they naturally think that resistance is useless; they hear that some one is coming down from London to take away their common from them; and they suppose they might as well try to stop a running stream as try to resist the united efforts of Government officials, the lord of the manor, and other great men in the district. But it will perhaps be said, that the amending bill which we are now asked to pass will introduce a better state of things, for it proposes, in the case of every future enclosure, to reserve one-tenth of the ground enclosed for a recreation ground and allotment gardens.

But although this would undoubtedly be an improvement on the old system, yet it will not work so well as many may be inclined to suppose. This can be easily shewn by an example. In an Enclosure Bill which was last year before Parliament it was proposed to enclose a common of seventy acres, in the heart of a densely populated district in the Potteries. This Common possesses great natural beauty, and is consequently largely resorted to. Suppose the common were enclosed, and one-tenth of it were reserved; would a recreation ground of 3½ acres and allotment gardens of the same extent be the smallest compensation to the tens of thousands who live in the neighbourhood of this common who would for ever lose the advantage of wandering over the whole seventy acres? It has been sufficiently difficult in the past to resist proposals to enclose commons, but if this amending bill were passed, all resistance in future would become hopeless, and enclosures would go on with far greater rapidity than ever. For this is what would inevitably take place. Proposals would be brought forward in Parliament to enclose various commons. We all know that landowners, and those who aspire to be landowners, are supreme in this House. There would consequently be a great preponderance of feeling in favour of the enclosures; and members would be able to say: "We cannot be doing wrong in voting for the enclosure, because Parliament has given sanction to the principle that the interests of the public and the poor are properly secured, if a reservation of one-tenth is made in their favour." It cannot be too carefully borne in mind that the circumstances of

the country have entirely changed since the commencement of this system of enclosures. The population of the country has enormously increased, and as the area of the common land has been at the same time greatly diminished, the commons which remain are each year becoming of greater value and importance to the public. The preamble of the Act of 1845 asserts that it is desirable to facilitate the enclosure of lands. This may have been true at the time, but I believe the day has come when the policy of Parliament in this matter should be fundamentally changed, and that we should now act upon the principle that it is desirable to retard the enclosure of land. The principles of political economy have been quoted to justify these enclosures. Probably there is no science the name of which is so often taken in vain. If something very bad is to be done, nothing is more commonly said than that political economy requires it. I have, however, no hesitation in asserting that after enclosure has reached a certain point, and this point, I believe, has long been attained in this country, political economy does not supply a single argument in favour of continuing the system of enclosures, but all its principles would shew that enclosure, if not stopped altogether, ought to be carried on with the utmost care and caution. All pasture produce in this country is gradually becoming dearer. The reason is this—we obtain corn from the most distant parts of the world, even from India, Australia, and California; but for dairy produce and such perishable commodities we have to rely chiefly on our own soil. The consequence is that dairy produce inevitably becomes dearer

with our progress in wealth and population. Much of the common land enclosed, and no inconsiderable portion of that which is left, constitutes some of the best pasture land in the kingdom, and is every year becoming more valuable. It is no answer to say that some of this land is ill drained, and not properly attended to. That is no argument for its enclosure, but simply for its better management. Why not issue a commission, and treat all the commons in the country in the same way as those within the metropolitan area, and provide some means for their improvement by a rate? If a common is not used for the purpose of recreation, the whole rate should be paid by the lord of the manor and the commoners who use the common. If, on the other hand, the common is used for the purpose of recreation, then it is only fair that a considerable portion of the expense of maintaining it should be thrown on the neighbourhood. It is said that the enclosure of commons promotes the production of wealth and gives employment to the poor; but the remarkable fact came out in evidence before the Select Committee recently appointed, that in many localities where the largest enclosures have been made the population has actually diminished since the enclosures have been effected. It is easy to understand the reason of this, for nothing can be more erroneous than to suppose that this desire to enclose land is solely promoted by a philanthropic wish to increase the productive resources of the country. In thousands of instances the commons enclosed do not produce a single blade of grass or a single ear of wheat more than when they were open spaces;

the only difference between their enclosed and unenclosed condition is, that now a privileged few can shoot tame pheasants, hares and rabbits over them, whereas before they could be enjoyed alike by the whole public. It is said that we may look more hopefully to the future. But what ground is there for increased confidence? We cannot at any rate look to the Government with any hope. I have already told the House how they attempted to force through an unjust Enclosure Bill in 1869. Last year another of these Enclosure Bills was before the House. Week after week the Government strained every effort to sneak the bill—if I may be allowed to use the expression—through at two or three o'clock in the morning. It was only by resorting to repeated motions for adjournment that they were happily defeated; if they had succeeded in passing this bill, much would have been done to destroy some of the most beautiful scenery in the country, and to prevent access to the Lizard Point and to Kynance Cove.

Our course of proceeding when dealing with the enclosure of land ought to be fundamentally changed. Every Enclosure Bill should be referred to a Select Committee, and evidence should be taken from the locality with regard to each enclosure. If we adopted such a course, we should not be legislating in the dark, as we are constantly doing at present. In vain will Education Bills and Licensing Bills be passed, in vain will Museums be built and stuffed with specimens from floor to ceiling, if those whom they are intended to benefit are shut out from the invigorating influence of communion with nature. It is urged in defence of

the legislation we are now asked to sanction, that urban commons would be placed in the same position as metropolitan commons were placed in by the measure of my right honourable friend the member for South Hants. (Mr Cowper Temple), and that they would consequently be secured against enclosure through the action of this House. But it seems to be forgotten that commons may be enclosed in two different ways—namely, by common law and by Parliamentary intervention. So far as Parliamentary intervention is concerned, this bill would no doubt protect urban commons, but it does nothing to prevent commons being enclosed by common law; and recent events have shewn that, so far as regards enclosure by common law, every common in the Kingdom is in imminent peril. In fact any common may be enclosed by the lord of the manor unless there happens to be some commoner sufficiently wealthy and public-spirited to incur the burden of a costly law suit. Berkhampstead and Plumstead commons would undoubtedly have been enclosed, had it not fortunately happened that these qualifications were possessed in an eminent degree by two of the commoners, Mr Augustus Smith and my honourable friend the member for Rochester (Mr Julian Goldsmid). It has been suggested by the present Under Secretary for the Home Department (Mr Winterbotham) that all the waste lands in the country should be surveyed. If there were such a survey, we should then be in a better position to judge what commons should be absolutely secured against enclosure. In advocating such a policy, I should be very sorry if it were thought that I am in favour of unjustly

interfering with the rights of property by depriving those of compensation who are fairly entitled to it. If a common is for ever to be secured against enclosure in order that the public may enjoy the use of it, it is only reasonable that the public should be prepared to grant whatever may be thought an adequate compensation to lords of manors, and to commoners. The common lands of this country not only afford opportunities for the healthful recreation and enjoyment of the public, but they should be further regarded as reserves for promoting the future well-being of the country. Some of these waste lands may perhaps some day be used for trying some great social and economic scheme; such, for instance, as co-operative agriculture. Feeling that nothing but good can result from further enquiry, I shall certainly vote in favour of the motion of my honourable friend the member for West Sussex (Col. Barttelot) to refer the bill to a Select Committee. On all questions relating to the enclosure of land the House is bound to act with the greatest care and caution. If an unfair tax is imposed, it may be soon removed. If an unjust law is passed, it can be repealed. But if a common is improperly enclosed, the injury which is done is irreparable. The land will never again be enjoyed by the public. The late Sir Robert Peel emphatically warned the House that there was no subject on which they were bound to act with greater circumspection. If these words of a great statesman had been taken more to heart, a vast amount of mischief which can never be repaired would have been prevented, and the public would not have been deprived, without chance of restoration, of privileges

of priceless value. This is not a question of a day, nor of an hour, nor for to-morrow only, but for all time. Not the least valuable of the many things which we have inherited from our predecessors are portions of the country in which nature has not been spoilt by man; and let us be careful that we are not less generous to those who will come after us; for no amount of vaunted civilization, no accumulation of wealth, can justify us in the eyes of posterity if we leave this country shorn of much of the beauty with which it has been endowed by nature[1].

[1] The bill was ultimately withdrawn, and a resolution was passed by the Select Committee, declaring that, pending legislation on the subject, it is inexpedient that any more commons should be enclosed.

THE LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN[1].

MAY, 1872.

IN asking the House to consider the present position of the Law Officers of the Crown, I am anxious to assure honourable members that nothing is farther from my intention than to make anything like a personal attack upon those who happen to hold these offices at the present time. My object is to point out the grave injury which is often done to the public by the fact that those who are the legal advisers of the Government, and who are primarily responsible for introducing measures of law reform into Parliament, not unfrequently have the greater portion of their time and energies absorbed by private practice. With regard to the present Law Officers I am quite ready to admit, that they have done nothing which may not have been done by their predecessors, and which will not improbably be done by their successors, unless Parliament intervenes to change the system. Although I shall chiefly confine these remarks to a consideration

[1] This speech was made in moving the following resolution:—That in the opinion of this House, it is desirable to adopt some new arrangements with regard to the Law Officers of the Crown, with the object of securing for the public the undivided attention of those who are primarily responsible for introducing measures of law reform and tendering legal advice to Her Majesty's Government.

of the position of those who are the Law Officers of the Government in the House of Commons, yet it is important that we should stay for a moment to ask whether it is possible for any one, however gifted he may be, adequately to discharge the duties allotted to a Lord Chancellor. In the first place he presides over the House of Lords as the Speaker presides over this House. Secondly, he holds three important judicial offices. First: he is the chief judge when the House of Lords sits as an Appellate Court. Secondly: he is the leading Judge in Equity. Thirdly: he is a member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. In addition to all this he has to discharge many important administrative duties. Is it reasonable to suppose that a man thus burdened with work can find the requisite time properly to consider the various measures of law reform, and to master the details of various subjects involving difficult questions of international law, upon which he may at any moment be called upon by the Government to give an opinion, the result of which opinion may decide an issue of peace or war? But when we turn to the House of Commons, we find that the arrangements which are made in reference to the legal members of the Government are in a far more unsatisfactory position here than they are in the House of Lords. In the first place, the Lord-Chancellor is a member of the Cabinet. He can therefore exert a direct influence on the Government. On the other hand, the Attorney- and Solicitor-General, not being members of the Cabinet, are only able to exercise their influence on the Government in an indirect and uncertain way. They may have advice to give which

never can be given, because it is never asked for. Again, the public has at least the satisfaction of knowing that the Lord-Chancellor can devote the whole of his time to his public duties. If, however, the Attorney- and Solicitor-General happen to be accomplished lawyers or great orators, briefs come rapidly in upon them. By the etiquette of the profession—and this etiquette is quite as scrupulously observed as are the mandates of the sternest despot—the Attorney- or Solicitor-General, if retained in a case, at once takes precedence over all the other Counsel who may be engaged on the same side; and, consequently, upon him devolves the chief part of the labour and responsibility. It is scarcely necessary to remind the House, after what has recently occurred in the Tichborne case, that a barrister who is the leader in a great case must have his time so entirely occupied and his energies so fully absorbed, that he can scarcely have a single hour or the smallest portion of superfluous activity to spare for any public duty. It therefore follows that if the Law Officers happen to be eminent in their profession, the only time they can possibly have for the discharge of their onerous public duties is an occasional hour or two which may be left to them after their services have been actively competed for by rival suitors and attorneys. Fortunately, or as some may think unfortunately, for the country, both the present Law Officers occupy so prominent a position in their profession that they each enjoy a large and absorbing private practice. Without making a more particular reference to instances which must be fresh in the recollection of the House, honourable members will be

easily able to recall to mind an Attorney-General who scarcely had any practice at all, and this learned gentleman freely acknowledged that the multifarious public duties which he had to perform were more than sufficient to occupy the whole of his time. We are therefore led to the conclusion that the time which an Attorney- or Solicitor-General devotes to private practice is not only time taken away from the public, but may be regarded as a measure of the extent to which his official work must necessarily be neglected. And, when we consider what the Law Officers have to do, I am sure the House will arrive at the opinion that there are no members of the Government, who, by an adequate discharge of their duties, can render greater service to the country; and who, by neglecting them, may inflict a more serious injury upon the public. In the first place, the Law Officers are primarily responsible for introducing measures of Law reform into this House. There is no country in the world whose legal system is so complicated as ours, and where the process of obtaining justice is so dear and so slow. It is notorious that a civil suit often costs far more than the money in dispute. A man will frequently submit to a great deal of injustice rather than incur the cost of a lawsuit. Men of business often say it is far better to lose a few hundred pounds than to have a lawsuit dragging on for two or three years. As this feeling spreads through the country it is evident that a most serious encouragement is given to fraud, and an influence is brought into operation to introduce a lower tone of morality into commercial dealings. But if any proof were want-

ing to convince the House of the urgent need there is of a thorough reform of our law, it is only necessary to refer to what the Attorney-General (Sir J. Coleridge) said on Wednesday last, when he told us that the laws relating to the property of married women were more worthy of a barbarous than of a civilized country. Again, it will be scarcely denied that our system of land-conveyancing is so complicated and expensive that if it were made simpler, cheaper, and more expeditious, such a reform—viewed simply in its economic aspects—would be a far greater gain to the country than a free breakfast-table or a remission of the income-tax. And, now, I will ask hon. members whether there is the smallest chance of passing any measure so great and comprehensive as a reform of our conveyancing system must be, if those who are responsible for the preparation of such a measure, and if those to whose charge it would be intrusted in this House, have nearly the whole of their time absorbed in other pursuits. We must all be ready to admit that the greatest legislative achievements of the present Parliament have been the Irish Church and the Irish Land Acts, and can any one deny that the passing of these measures was in no small degree due to the mastery of details and the perfect knowledge of the questions possessed by the Prime Minister? If, however, he had been less completely master of all the details of these measures, we should probably have got into such inextricable confusion that they would either not have passed at all, or would have left this House in an almost unworkable form. But no Attorney- or Solicitor-General has ever been more dis-

tinguished for legal knowledge than is the Prime Minister for financial skill; and I ask the House, if he permitted this financial skill to be competed for by rival mercantile companies, if he spent nine-tenths of his time engrossed in commercial pursuits in the city, could he by any possibility have prepared and mastered those great and difficult measures to which I have referred? It would be thought absolutely intolerable for either the First Lord of the Treasury, the Secretary for War, the President of the Poor-Law Board, or the head of any other great department of the State, to give up nearly the whole of his time to private business; why then should it be less intolerable for those who officially represent the department of Law in this House to devote nearly the whole of their energies to private practice? But the subject can perhaps be presented in another and a still stronger light. The Law Officers have not simply to introduce measures of Law reform. They are also primarily responsible for giving legal advice both to the Government and to this House. There is scarcely a measure introduced into Parliament which does not involve some difficult legal questions, upon which the Government and this House may not require an authoritative legal opinion. Now, the Government may, at any moment, in a most critical juncture of public affairs, lose the services of their Law advisers, although these services may be of the most essential importance, not only to the Government but also to the country. The Prime Minister has frankly admitted that the Alabama Treaty was never even submitted to the Law Officers of the Crown. What was the reason of this? I do

not wish for one moment to blame the Prime Minister. He no doubt was far too kindhearted and considerate for the feelings of others, to put so great a strain as the consideration of a treaty upon an Attorney-General whose days and nights were being given to the Tichborne case, and to a Solicitor-General who probably had at least a dozen leading Chancery suits under his special superintendence. But this is not all. When a Government measure is before the House, we constantly want, and cannot obtain, a legal interpretation of some clause from the Law Officers of the Government. We all know what has again and again happened this session in reference to the Ballot Bill. The House requiring a legal explanation of some clause or amendment, an appeal is made to the Solicitor-General (Sir G. Jessel), but he evidently has no time to give to the consideration of the measure, and the only result of his rising is at once, as we all know, to make "confusion worse confounded." But it is not only with regard to Government measures that we have to make these complaints. Last week a bill was before the House introduced by my hon. and learned friend the member for Clare (Sir C. O'Loghlen). Such contradictory accounts were given as to the legal effect of this bill, that there was a very general feeling in the House that it was impossible to give a vote upon it, until we obtained an authoritative legal interpretation of some of its clauses. In this state of perplexity we naturally turned for assistance to the Law Officers of the Crown. Where were they? I need scarcely say that they were not in this House. Sir George Jessel was, of course, at Lincoln's Inn, and

Sir John Coleridge, at the very time he was wanted in this House, was performing the important work of arguing in the Queen's Bench in a case (Skinner *v.* Usher) which arose from a dispute about hiring a cab at a railway station. This latter incident serves as a singularly instructive comment on the present system. It might be supposed that a dispute about the hiring of a cab could be settled in a few moments; but the case of Skinner *v.* Usher had already assumed the form of a long and costly suit, and, from some remarks which fell from the learned judge who presided, it appeared that the case depended upon the interpretation of certain clauses in an Act of Parliament which had left this House in so obscure and unintelligible a form that it was almost impossible precisely to define its meaning. The dispute may therefore go on until it has been carried into every Court in the kingdom. But the most significant part of the affair is this,—that this very Act, the unintelligibility of which perplexes our most learned judges, was passed by the very Government of which Sir J. Coleridge was himself one of the Law Officers. We therefore arrive at this result, and it is one which I would earnestly commend to the serious consideration of Parliament and the country:—that according to the present system it may happen that at the very time when the services of the Attorney-General are required in this House, he may be arguing in a case which could be settled without long and costly litigation, if he could give a little more time to measures when considered by this House, and thus prevent their passing in a form which renders it impossible for

them to be understood by the public, or explained by the judges. What security have we that another Alabama case may not arise, if the Law Officers are so much absorbed in private practice that a Prime Minister cannot bring himself to disturb them with any question involving considerations of public policy? But perhaps not the least serious evil of the present system arises from the circumstance that the Government may have to decide what part they shall take in some civil or criminal case. In determining the course of conduct which they shall pursue, they must be chiefly guided by the advice of their Law Officers; but of this advice they may be completely deprived because the Law Officers may be retained in the case by some private individuals who are interested in it. Two years ago the Government had to decide whether the interests of the public demanded that they should undertake the prosecution of the directors of the Overend, Gurney Company. I am not now going to question the conclusion which the Government then came to, but what I do wish to point out is, that the Government, in arriving at any conclusion at all, had of course to rely on the advice which might be tendered to them by the Attorney- and Solicitor-General. But it happened that the Solicitor-General was precluded from giving any advice to the Government at all, because he had been retained by some of the directors to defend them; and, of course, the Attorney-General might also have been retained. But in striking contrast to what occurred in this particular instance, I will ask the House to consider what has happened in another case, which during the last

few months has occupied much public attention. Sir J. Coleridge, who is now Attorney-General, was, as we all know, the leading counsel against the Claimant in the Tichborne case. Having one week been acting as counsel against him, he had next week to become the adviser of the Government in prosecuting him on a serious criminal charge, and also had to advise the Government to spend a very large sum of money in the prosecution. The consequences produced in the country have been extremely mischievous. Depend upon it, when the Government has to come to this House and ask for the money for this prosecution, they will find that a widespread feeling of discontent exists throughout the country in reference to the expenditure; not because the money is grudged, but because, from the peculiar position occupied by the Attorney-General in the case, the public has got an idea that there has not been exactly fair play. No one, probably, will more regret the prevalence of such a feeling than the Attorney-General himself; but, as when he was engaged in the case he found it necessary to brand the Claimant with every opprobrious epithet the dictionary contains, commonplace people think it hardly satisfactory that he should afterwards advise a prosecution on behalf of the Government and the nation.

Enough has probably been now said to shew the House how very unsatisfactorily the present system works; even the excuse of economy cannot be urged in its favour. By a Treasury minute recently issued the Attorney-General is to receive £7,000 a year and the Solicitor-General £6,000 a year, simply as

retaining fees[1], for in addition they are to be paid for all contentious business in which they have to appear on behalf of the Government. It would require a very lively imagination to suggest what sum they might not receive under the head of "contentious business." It is no palliation but rather an aggravation, of the present system to say, that these salaries are not paid out of the ordinary taxation of the country, but are obtained from patent fees, for these fees constitute one of the most obnoxious and objectional imposts ever levied on ingenuity and industry. I ask the House to remember that the salaries thus to be paid to the Attorney and Solicitor-General are respectively 40 and 20 per cent. more than the salary received by a Prime Minister or a Secretary of State. But this is not all. The Prime Minister and the Secretaries of State give their undivided attention to their public duties, whereas the country may only obtain from the Attorney- and Solicitor-General some chance hours that they are able to spare after their private practice has been attended to. If this Treasury Minute is not carefully scrutinized by this House, the electors by whose votes we were returned will very properly come to the conclusion, that all the fine things that were said on the hustings about economy were simply idle words. Although I do not desire to advocate a policy of niggardly parsimony, yet I have no doubt that eminent lawyers would devote their energies entirely

[1] This Treasury minute will not apply to the present Attorney-General, Sir J. Coleridge. He will continue to derive his official salary from patent and other fees. From a statement subsequently made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr Lowe) when defending this minute, it appears that the amount Sir J. Coleridge thus receives is not less than £12,000 a year.

to the public service for smaller salaries than is usually supposed. The Legal member of Council, in India, receives £8,000 a year; his whole time is devoted to his official work, and no one will deny that a man would usually far sooner receive £5,000 a year in this country than £8,000 a year in Calcutta. And yet some of the most eminent jurists have been willing to go to India as Legal members of Council. Among the many distinguished men who have held this position, it is sufficient to mention Lord Macaulay, Sir Henry Maine, and Mr Fitzjames Stephen. During the three years that Mr Stephen has held the office, he has done more for Law reform in India than we can hope to see done in this country in double the time; and now I will ask the House, could he by any possibility have carried out these measures of reform if he had held a leading position at the Calcutta Bar and nearly the whole of his time had been occupied with private practice?

If I am asked what system ought to be substituted for the present one, without presuming to suggest a complete measure of reform, it certainly seems to me that there must be a general agreement as to the desirability of separating the political and judicial functions of the Lord-Chancellor. What is required in the House of Commons is a Minister of Justice who should be at the head of a department of law and justice, who should be primarily responsible for introducing measures of law reform, who should be the legal adviser of the Government, who should be always ready to give a legal opinion on questions arising in this House, and whose whole time should be devoted

to the public. Such a Minister of Justice might receive £8,000 a year; but even if it were necessary to pay him £10,000 a year, no public money would ever be more wisely and advantageously spent. The holder of this office would no doubt be one of the most eminent lawyers of the day, and it might be arranged, that, in the event of a change of Government, he should receive a pension as a Lord-Chancellor does now, and he might occupy a judicial position in a Supreme Court of Appeal. When it is necessary for the Government to be represented in Court, it would be easy to retain on their behalf the most eminent counsel, just as is now done by the Government of India, by the Bank of England, and by most great corporations. These counsel, who would be retained by the Government, might still be called Attorney- and Solicitor-General, but as their offices would be entirely non-political, it would not be necessary for them to have seats in this House or to vacate their offices on a change of Government. An important indirect advantage would result from this arrangement. The Government might then be always represented by the most eminent counsel at the Bar, whereas it now often happens that the Government is not represented in Court by those who are most distinguished in their profession, for the very simple reason that the greatest lawyers may be either unwilling or unable to enter Parliament.

In conclusion, I will only say that I hope the subject will soon be taken up by some one in this House far more competent to deal with it than myself; but, should this not be the case, the question is much too important to be permitted to drop, and I will promise

to pursue it with persistency and perseverance. A great authority has said that the well-being of a community is to be estimated by the extent to which justice is made cheap and expeditious. If this test of prosperity is applied to our own country, we must come to the conclusion that she is not to be congratulated on her present condition.

SPEECH AT BRIGHTON.

FEBRUARY, 1873.

IF in the remarks I am about to make but very slight allusion is made to the past, you will not, I trust, suppose that I adopt this course in order to avoid the responsibility of any vote that I have given, or of any words that I have spoken. But the past session has, during the last few months, been so frequently reviewed; what was badly done has been so often criticized by the Opposition; what was well done has been so constantly praised, not only by the friends of the Government, but by the Government themselves; that I shall not weary you by attempting my poor contribution to this great aggregation of repetition and reiteration. In the future there is almost an incalculable number of questions which may worthily engage our anxious consideration. In proceeding to discuss some of these, we have, I think, a right to complain that we receive so minute a modicum of assistance from the responsible Ministers of the Crown. Ever since the beginning of September, scarcely a week has elapsed without the delivery of two or three speeches from various members of the Government. These speeches may be searched in vain for the slightest glimmer of light shed upon the legislation which impends over

us in the future. Would it not be far better that those whom we are bound to look up to as statesmen, instead of repeating for the thousandth time that the Ballot has been passed, and purchase in the army abolished, should tell us upon what principles the important measures which we are promised next session will be based? It will no doubt be said such a course could not be adopted without divulging Cabinet secrets. But what occasion is there for all this secrecy and mystery? If, for instance, the Cabinet has come to any decision in reference to local taxation, would it not be better for the Government—it certainly would be better for the nation—that the general outlines of the proposed measure should be known? It would then be fully considered by those who have most practical knowledge of the subject. Constituencies would be able to confer with their members upon it, and the Government would no doubt obtain from this discussion many valuable suggestions. But as matters are now managed, everything seems arranged, not to secure the best legislation, but to give a minister who introduces a new measure an opportunity of making a great theatrical display. On Thursday next it will probably be announced that on the following Monday the promised bill on Local Taxation will be introduced. As the expected day approaches, gossip will invent countless rumours. A kind of meretricious excitement is aroused, and the House will be crowded on the occasion. The Government may very probably bring forward some proposals which no one may have anticipated, and which, consequently, may never have been discussed. The country is taken by surprise, and the

day for the second reading arrives before the bill has been properly and calmly considered. Moreover the whole discussion is at once thrown into the vortex of party politics. Some proposal is made, of which, perhaps, hardly fifty members really approve; but they get over their objections on hearing from the "Whip" that the Ministry will consider it a vital point, and, if it is rejected, will abandon the bill. In this way it not unfrequently happens that some principle is sanctioned, fraught with the most mischievous consequences in the future. In proof of this, innumerable examples might be quoted. It will, however, be sufficient to refer to the prodigal waste of millions of national property, when at the time of the disestablishment of the Irish Church, the reversion of the Tithe rent-charge was handed over gratuitously to Irish landowners. Again, it can scarcely be doubted that the Irish Land Bill would have diffused a happier influence if the wild expectations, which were doomed to inevitable disappointment, had not been permitted to grow up unchecked during the many months which elapsed between the time when the measure was promised and the time when a knowledge of its provisions could be obtained. As a last example, it can scarcely be denied that much of the unfortunate agitation which has been created by the Elementary Education Act is due to the circumstance, that people have been made far more angry than they otherwise would be, because, while the Act was hurried through the House, there was scarcely time to judge what would be the consequences of many of its provisions. It is by common consent assumed that the two chief Government mea-

sures of the coming session will refer to local taxation and to Irish University Education. With regard to local taxation, I believe that no subject that has been brought before this Parliament will more severely test not only its administrative capacity, but also the courage of the Government. Rumour says that the measure has been specially taken up and will be brought forward by Mr Gladstone. I hope this report will prove to be true, for in financial capacity, and in the management of a complicated financial measure when passing through the House, there is no living politician, in my opinion, to be at all compared to him. Whatever shortcomings the measure may contain, will, I believe, so far as Mr Gladstone is concerned, not be due to any want of capacity, but either to an inability or to an unwillingness to resist some influences against which he will have to contend. Already the House of Commons, on the motion of Sir Massey Lopes, has declared that many charges now borne by the local rates ought to be transferred to the consolidated fund. In the majority were to be found a great number of Liberal members, who, I fear, on this question are likely to exercise a powerful influence on the Government. I think that few proposals which have ever been suggested would prove more mischievous, and ought, therefore, to be more strenuously resisted, than the proposition to transfer local charges to the consolidated fund. In the first place, it would undermine that principle of local self-government, the loss of which would fatally weaken the feeling of self-reliance among the people. If funds were provided by the State instead of by local authorities, they would of

course have to be administered by State officials, and the whole country would be enveloped in a great network of officialism. National energy, thus trammelled, would inevitably decline. But the proposal involves a still more serious objection. It is a maxim, as old as the hills, that public money is looked upon as no one's money. There would be a scramble for these grants from the consolidated fund, and localities would vie with each other in seeing how much of the money of the State they could spend. If the local authorities in this or any other town waste, for instance, £20,000, the indignation of the ratepayers is at once aroused, for they know that the money which is wasted comes directly out of their own pockets. But suppose a grant from the consolidated fund of a much larger amount were squandered in some useless work. A very different feeling would be excited; it perhaps would be thought that the money, though wasted, would be good for the trade of the place. It would not be taken directly out of the ratepayers' pockets, but it would be drawn from those coffers of the State which many seem to regard as a reservoir which can never be exhausted, and which never needs replenishing. No plan that could be devised would more effectually encourage extravagance. Do not be for one moment deluded with the idea that less money would be taken out of your pockets. Every million transferred from the rates would necessitate the taking considerably more than a million from the consolidated fund, and thus the aggregate amount extracted from the community by taxation would not be diminished but increased. But the strangest part of the whole affair

is this, that those who advocate this transfer of local charges never explain how the extra money that will be required by the State is to be obtained. They do not even seem at all to recognize the fact that more money will be required, for it may be frequently observed that, side by side with this proposal, it is calmly suggested that there should be a "free breakfast table," or that the duty on malt should be abolished, or that the income-tax should be totally and unconditionally repealed. How very much trouble might be saved if we were all of us more careful to remember that the State cannot, any more than individuals, obtain money as if it were rained down from heaven—a spontaneous product of nature. Do not suppose that I think nothing is required to be done in reference to local taxation. There is much injustice which urgently needs redress, and there are many most important reforms which ought to be carried out. But the more attention I give to the subject, the more convinced I become that the injustice which most needs to be remedied is to be looked for in a very different quarter from that which has been pointed out by those representatives of the landowning classes who have most prominently agitated the question. It is, of course, impossible on the present occasion to do anything more than give a bare summary of conclusions; but, as the discussion proceeds, I believe it will be generally recognized that local taxation is not so much a landowner's question as it is a house-occupier's question. Far from landowners being unfairly treated, they enjoy many exemptions which are quite indefensible. In the first place, country mansions are subjected to a much

lower assessment than they ought to be. They are, in fact, assessed according to an altogether imaginary standard as to what their letting value would be; whereas the essential principle of a rate or tax on a house is that it should be a tax on expenditure rather than on property. Again, pleasure-grounds and plantations do not contribute their proper share to local taxation. Woods and game-preserves almost entirely escape assessment. Nothing can be more unjust than this. Again the landowners' interests in mines ought undoubtedly to be rated. It is, however, in towns that there is perhaps the most injustice associated with the present method of levying local taxation. Nearly the entire burden of the rates falls upon the occupiers of houses, and I have never heard a valid reason alleged why ground rents should not be rated. One example will shew the singular unfairness of the present system. Some of you probably know from painful experience, that if some improvement is carried out which permanently increases the value of house property, it is paid for entirely by the occupiers of houses; the owners get the improvement for nothing. Thus, suppose some great drainage works are to be constructed which will cost £500,000. The money is borrowed on the principle that by paying a high rate of interest, say 7 per cent., it shall be paid off in 21 years. The occupier of a house who has a lease for 21 years finds that a large addition is suddenly made to his rates. He pays the additional rate during the whole period of the lease, and at the expiration of the lease the owner of the house raises the rent because the value has been increased by the superior

drainage to which he has not contributed a shilling. Another anomaly of the present system is that county magistrates impose rates. We shall some day wonder how it came to pass that a non-elective body has been so long permitted to impose taxation on the people. There are many other things that I should like to say to you on the subject of local taxation, but it is time that I should pass on to the next important measure which has been promised to us by the Government. I have already expressed an opinion that we are bound to feel no little satisfaction that the question of local taxation is, as we hear, to be taken up by Mr Gladstone. I wish we could look with the same confidence to his treatment of the Irish University question. The reason why I have so little misgiving with regard to the one subject, and so much misgiving with regard to the other, is that the more Mr Gladstone's political career is studied, the more evident does it appear that whilst on the path of financial reform he will go as far as he is permitted, he will, on the path of religious equality, only go as far as he is forced. Nothing appears so inexplicable and so inconsistent with the avowed principles of the Government as their conduct in reference to Irish University education. They have resorted to so many artifices to avoid a distinct and intelligible declaration of their policy, that we might almost be led to assume that they have been under the spell of some sinister Ultramontane influence. For five years everything has been done that the forms of the House would permit to introduce the principle of religious equality into Irish University education by the abolition of every vestige of religious tests and

disabilities. You all know what power a Government has to throw impediments in the way of an independent member. Twice they have managed to obtain a not very creditable victory by resorting to the threat of a resignation. If the repetition of such a manœuvre is not checked, it will be disastrous to the independence of Parliament. At length, however, the time has happily arrived when, I believe, the good sense of the House of Commons will insist that there shall be no more of this shifting and this shirking. The Government will be forced to introduce a measure of their own, but in case legislation may be again deferred on a subject which so urgently needs settlement, I have quite decided on the first day of the session to reintroduce the bill, the second reading of which was last year carried by a majority of four to one. If it should be found that the scheme of the Government is a more satisfactory solution of the question than the bill of which I have had charge, no one will be more rejoiced than I shall be, and I shall, of course, at once withdraw my own bill. If, however, it should be found that their scheme contains, under an ingenious disguise, the vicious principle of concurrent endowment; if it should be found that they propose to dismember and disendow Trinity College, Dublin—an ancient and illustrious institution, where the highest culture has always found encouragement; if, further, it is proposed out of the funds of this College, when it has been despoiled, to create not a teaching University, but an examining Board, into which the principle of religious nomination is to be introduced; then, indeed, may it be earnestly hoped that the House of Commons will

not be coerced, either by a threat of resignation or dissolution, to sanction a policy which will not only impede intellectual advancement, but will cause Ireland in the future to be still more injured than she has been in the past by the blighting influence of sectarian rancour. Although the two subjects to which I have referred may probably have the first claim on the consideration of the Government, yet there are other questions which we may reasonably hope will engage their attention. The English Education Act being one of those compromises which, intended to please every one, generally end by pleasing scarcely anyone, urgently requires amendment. First and foremost it is necessary that the provisions for securing the attendance of children at school should be amended. These provisions are so imperfect that the Act, so far as it has produced any effect in getting children to school in the rural districts, is a lamentable failure. It is also of the utmost importance that the 25th clause should be repealed—a clause which has done so much to fritter away the educational zeal of the country in barren sectarian squabbles. In saying this I am bound to confess that we who hold those views on education, which are supposed to be represented by the Birmingham League, are not altogether free from blame in the matter. Instead of distinctly stating that we were in favour of a complete separation of religious and secular teaching, we gave a kind of tacit consent to the most indefensible of all proposals, viz. that the Bible should be read without note or comment. The scene that was lately enacted in the presence of the Birmingham School Board throws an instructive light

upon the consequences which result from introducing sectarianism into rate-supported schools. The Board had advertised for a certain number of masters, and many applicants accordingly presented themselves. It might have been thought that the chief object of the Board would have been to ascertain whether the applicants would be likely to be efficient teachers; but instead of this, various members of the Board, representing different religious denominations, subjected the applicants to a severe cross-examination as to their religious opinions. One unfortunate candidate was worried into giving two or three contradictory definitions of verbal inspiration. Another, on saying that he believed in the Atonement, was asked to which of the twenty-five doctrines of the Atonement that have been promulgated did he refer. Another, on speaking dubiously upon some point of doctrine, was informed that a Catholic priest would watch him; much in the same way, I presume, as a cat watches a mouse. All this badinage and chaff, of course, excited roars of laughter. Is it possible to have a more instructive comment upon the religious influence likely to be exerted by the Education Act, if it is permitted to remain in its present form? Reference has already been made to the fact that recent legislation has done little or nothing to improve the education of the rural districts. As it was with the towns, so, I believe, will it be with the country districts. Until household suffrage gave the town artisan a vote, there seemed to be little chance of any legislation to secure the education of the town population. Just in the same way, it seems too certain that, until household suffrage

is extended to the counties, there will be no earnest and effectual attempt made to secure the education of our rural labourers. One remark in reference to this subject I think I am bound to make[1]. If household suffrage is extended to the counties, there certainly appears not the slightest reason why the 40*s.* freehold qualification should be retained for non-residents. The abolition of the freehold qualification, so far as non-residents are concerned, would get rid of one of the greatest abuses of our electoral system, viz.: the non-residential faggot votes. Nothing contributes so much to increase the cost of county elections as these faggot voters. They are often brought from a great distance at the expense of the candidate, they have often no interest in the county, and their qualification is frequently entirely fictitious. When the rural labourer has been enfranchised, the injustice of excluding women from the suffrage will, I think, come more forcibly home to us all. When it is remembered that the extension of the suffrage to the rural labourers is advocated by members of the Government, and by moderate politicians of nearly all shades of opinion, and when we reflect that the Tories themselves have not announced any antagonism to it, I think it must be admitted that every shadow of an excuse for maintaining the electoral disabilities of women is swept away. If the rural labourers in their present ignorance and dependence are fit to exercise electoral power, it cannot surely be urged that the

[1] In a speech I previously made at Brighton, I expressed the opinion that if household suffrage were extended to the counties, the measure should be accompanied with one for the redistribution of seats based on the principle of proportional or minority representation.

women of England are not fit to be entrusted with a similar privilege. Mr Bright, an authority to whom we are all bound to pay the greatest respect, thinks that even if the present Parliament should last until the autumn of 1874, the question of household suffrage in the counties should not be dealt with till after a dissolution. It seems, however, difficult to suggest any valid reason for this delay. Mr Bright apparently thinks that the present Parliament, during the comparatively short time it has to live, should concentrate a chief part of its energy in insisting upon a reduction of the National Expenditure. No one would more gladly lend a helping hand to this good work than myself. It is, however, well to remind you that nothing is more common than enthusiastically to advocate the cause of economy, and at the same time to favour schemes which will inevitably lead to a great increase in national expenditure. How often does it happen that those who desire a reduction of expenditure, also desire free education, State-aided emigration, and the transfer of local charges to the consolidated fund. Well, if all these things can be done without adding to national expenditure, something more than the dreams of the alchymists of old will be realized, for we should have at length discovered how to make wealth out of nothing. Questions affecting reduction of expenditure are, of course, intimately connected with proposals for reducing or remitting taxation. The advocates of the repeal of various taxes not unfrequently commit the same kind of inconsistency which, as has been shewn, may be fairly laid to the charge of some of the professed friends of economy.

Thus the landed interest one day demands the repeal of the malt duty, and the next day declares with still greater emphasis that the national expenditure should be increased by making the State bear the burden of many charges now paid for by local rates. There has lately been a certain amount of agitation in favour of the repeal of the income-tax, and many of the prominent leaders in the movement, instead of shewing how the requisite saving is to be effected, or how the money which the tax yields is to be otherwise provided, give their adherence to the proposal for a "Free Breakfast Table." As this agitation for the repeal of the income-tax is likely to assume increased significance, I should like to say a few words to you about it. No one who has ever devoted the slightest attention to the subject can pretend to deny that there are many disadvantages, and that there is much inequality associated with the income-tax. But does not the same remark hold equally true with regard to almost every other tax? It must moreover be remembered that it is one thing to endeavour to make the assessment of the income-tax more just, and to attempt to improve the method of its collection, and it is altogether another and a very different thing to propose its total and unconditional repeal. The existing mode of collecting the tax is unnecessarily worrying and vexatious. The present discontent with the tax is no doubt in no small degree due to Mr Lowe's unfortunate fondness for fantastic financial tricks. With regard to making the assessment of the tax more just, it certainly seems that something should be done to place temporary and uncertain incomes on a different

footing from those incomes which are derived from a certain and permanent source. A possessor of a permanent income, derived from an investment in the Funds, no doubt has more to spend than one who has an income of the same amount derived from a business, a profession, or a salary. It has therefore been suggested, with a view to obtaining a kind of rough approximation to equality, that a fixed deduction should be made from all temporary incomes before they are assessed. Thus if the deduction were one-third, an income of £600, derived from a business, salary, or profession, would pay the tax on only £400. I do not by any means wish positively to pledge myself to the opinion that no better way of securing greater equality in the assessment of this tax can be found. The subject is surrounded with difficulties, and I cannot help thinking it would have been much better if the members of Parliament and the shrewd City men, who gathered in such numbers the other day at the Guildhall, had addressed themselves to the solution of these difficulties, and had not expended so much vague declamation in denouncing the tax. Some of the speakers at the meeting seemed to give their sanction to a simple excision of Schedule D. If this were done, incomes derived from business would contribute nothing to the tax, and no one condescended to suggest in what other way those who were thus exempted from the income-tax should be made to contribute to the revenue. Never, probably, was a more unjust proposal propounded. The wealthy merchants, bankers, and stock-brokers are to escape scot-free, whereas the tax would continue to be levied with scrupulous exactness

from the annuity of the poor widow, from the salary of the underpaid clerk, and from the stipend of the hard-worked clergyman, or Nonconformist minister. Not less unjust is the proposal to substitute for the income-tax a tax levied solely on property. Why should one who is obtaining £20,000 a year from a business or profession escape a tax which is imposed upon one who, after a great struggle, has managed to save sufficient property to provide a bare competency for himself and his family? You should be careful to understand what is the true signification to be given to this demand for the total and unconditional repeal of the income-tax. It must mean one of two things: either the tax must be got rid of, even if other taxation, such as the levying of new duties on commodities, is to be substituted for it; or if the expenditure is sufficiently reduced to enable the money which the tax yields to be dispensed with, then it is to be abolished before a single other tax is reduced or repealed. Two years ago I did not hesitate to protest against the Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because the income-tax was made to bear the entire burden of additional expenditure. I ventured to say then that the extra expenditure should be borne partly by direct and partly by indirect taxation. If, on the other hand, it is proposed, when expenditure is diminished, to devote the entire saving to the reduction of the income-tax, I shall not the less feel it my duty to assert that a reduction of direct and indirect taxation ought to go on simultaneously, and instead of devoting the entire surplus to diminishing the income-tax, a portion of it ought to be employed in lessening the duties on

some commodities of general consumption. There are many reasons why, at the present time, it is peculiarly important to enforce the strictest economy in the expenditure of public money. In the first place, the rapid rise which is taking place in prices—the consequent augmentation in the cost of living, and the greater dearness of materials, must exert a powerful tendency in adding to the expenses of all Governments. Then, again, although we may most emphatically condemn the policy of entering into a rivalry of armaments with the great military Powers of the continent, yet we cannot help feeling that some influence must be exercised upon our expenditure by their prodigal and increasing outlay in warlike preparations. But you may fairly ask, What is the best way of practically enforcing economy on our Government? I have already reminded you that it is not altogether the fault of the Government, but the blame must, at least, be largely shared by those who are never tired of demanding grants of money for all kinds of purposes from the Imperial Exchequer. Again, it cannot be doubted that Parliament might do far more than is done in promoting economy by carefully looking after the various Government departments, and insisting that we get money's value for money spent. Depend upon it this end will not be attained by occasional speeches about economy. What is needed is patient and almost unceasing labour. No efficient check can ever be imposed upon an extravagant department, except by those who devote months, nay, even years, of patient investigation, to mastering all the details of expenditure. Any member of Parliament who, for instance,

would undertake such a task, with regard to the Army and Navy estimates, would render a most signal service to his country. Opinions may differ as to the strength of the Army and Navy which we ought to maintain, but there cannot be two opinions upon the importance of insisting upon that administrative efficiency which will give us the best army and the best fleet at the least possible outlay. In saying that, when we are considering the question of public expenditure, we cannot lose sight of the great military preparations that are being made by numerous countries, do not suppose that I am for one moment advocating a policy of active and meddlesome foreign intervention. Least of all should any encouragement be given to that policy which was in vogue a few years ago, when our Foreign Ministers were always proffering advice, with the distinct understanding that this was the only kind of assistance the English nation was, under any circumstances, prepared to give. But although we may deprecate this kind of official interference, yet there certainly seems reason to regret that, as a nation, we are gradually taking less interest in foreign affairs, and appear more ready to assume a policy of selfish isolation, as if the highest mission of a great country was to extend trade and become rich. The conduct of individuals is, we all know, probably much less influenced by law than it is by the public opinion of their neighbours. Just in the same way, although the meddlesome interference of a Minister may be resented, yet we may fairly conclude that a nation would be less ready to blemish her reputation with wrong-doing, if she knew that her conduct would

receive due condemnation from the public opinion of other countries. During the past year two acts have been done by Prussia and France respectively which ought, I venture to think, to have called forth stronger protests from the English people. Rarely has an act of greater harshness been committed than when Germany offered to the people of Alsace and Lorraine no alternative but expatriation, or immediate military service in a foreign army. The French Government, apparently with the tacit consent of the French nation, is, week after week, committing acts of the most vindictive cruelty in the execution of the Communist prisoners at Satory. No nation can be more jealous of fame and of glory than the French. They seem ready to make any sacrifice to remove what they consider the disgrace of recent military disasters. Those who throughout the world appreciate mercy and justice, will think that if these executions are continued much longer, it is not the disgrace of Sedan, but that of Satory, which the French themselves will some day be most anxious to efface. There are very many other subjects on which I should, if time permitted, like to speak to you. You will probably expect me to say a few words upon those disputes between capital and labour which are now assuming such serious significance. Any one, however, who thinks at all about the subject will soon discover that these disputes have their origin in causes which are altogether beyond the power of Parliament to control. Until some arrangements are adopted with the view of linking capital and labour together by the bond of a common pecuniary interest, Acts of

Parliament and Courts of Arbitration will be alike powerless to prevent strikes and lock-out. How is it likely that antagonism will cease whilst employers think that their first concern is to buy labour as cheaply as possible, and whilst the employed consider that they are, above all things, interested in selling their labour at the highest possible price? The hostility between capital and labour, which is now causing so many disastrous consequences, and is producing such widespread misery, may be regarded as an indication that our industrial system is passing, by slow and painful steps, into another phase, which promises a brighter and a happier future. We shall at last be taught by bitter experience how essential it is to counteract the antagonism now prevailing between capital and labour, by giving workmen an opportunity of more directly participating in the profits of the industry in which they are engaged. It may, I believe, be asserted as a fact beyond dispute, that the principle of co-partnership has never been fairly tried without radically improving the relations between employers and employed, and without powerfully promoting the interests of all the parties concerned. The admirable training provided by co-partnership may gradually fit the workmen for that highest form of industrial development in which they supply the capital which their industry needs. Let me, however, entreat you never to lose sight of the fact that these great things are to be achieved, not by Act of Parliament, but by the prudence and self-reliance of the workmen themselves. All that Parliament should be asked to do is, as far as possible, to secure for each man and woman

a "fair field and no favour," and to guarantee as far as possible to all entire liberty of action. On the one hand, workmen should have the most complete freedom to combine, but, on the other hand, the law should give the most ample protection to any one who may be coerced to join a combination. You will probably wish to know what I think of the sentence lately passed upon the gas stokers, and what is my opinion of the law by which they were convicted. That the sentence was unduly severe is acknowledged not only by the general voice of public opinion, but by the Government, for the Home Secretary has just reduced the punishment by two-thirds. It is, however, to my mind, an eminently unsatisfactory thing that these men should have been punished, not for a breach of contract, but for an offence against the obsolete enactments known as the Conspiracy Laws. The harshness of the sentence even as it at present stands is the most apparent when it is contrasted with the punishment which is meted out to other offences. A ruffian about the same time, who knocked his wife down and kicked her all over the body, bit her twice on the arm, and finally tore a piece of flesh out of her neck, was sentenced by the Dudley magistrates to only one month's hard labour. Such inequality will excite amongst the people a feeling which no Government will find it prudent to attempt to withstand. All the existing laws which seek to regulate Trades' Union offences need fundamental revision. The Master and Servants Act is based on a principle essentially unjust, and there never was a more bungling and obscure

piece of legislation than the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Although I shall to-morrow have an opportunity of speaking to you on India, I cannot pass the subject entirely by on the present occasion. No greater misfortune, and no greater disgrace, could befall our country than if we alienate the Indian people from us by indifference and neglect. The House of Commons has undertaken to govern them; no representative assembly ever assumed a graver responsibility. It is sometimes asked, What can the British Parliament do for India? Amongst a hundred other things, it can at least do this: it can see that India is not sacrificed to the party exigencies of home politics; it can see that charges are not unjustly thrown upon India which ought to be borne by England; it can call those to account who waste her money by administrative incompetency; and last, not least, it can protect the finances of India against the demands of those who seem to think that she is specially created to supply cheap cotton for Lancashire, and to afford an eligible investment for English capital. A Secretary of State for India ought to feel that he is sufficiently supported by public opinion to be able to resist those who apparently consider that, however many millions they squander in some unprofitable work, they should, by being able to draw upon the resources of India, be secured a high rate of profit, and be guaranteed against all loss. It sometimes seems to be thought that the people of India are so backward and unenlightened, that they will neither detect injustice, nor appreciate efforts to promote their

welfare. Never was there a more unfortunate delusion. Nothing that is done in this country respecting India escapes their keen and active intelligence. The smallest service rendered to them is not less sure to excite in them the liveliest feelings of gratitude, than is any act of injustice certain to receive from them its proper condemnation. One fact alone is sufficient to shew what a lamentable want of appreciation there is of the magnitude of the trust we have assumed in taking upon ourselves to control the destinies of two hundred millions of people. I am not now going to refer to the continuous neglect with which successive Governments have treated the affairs of India in the House of Commons, but I will ask you for one moment to think what impression must be produced by the fact, that although during the recess Minister after Minister has spoken upon every conceivable topic, not one of them could condescend to devote one moment's consideration to India. The Under Secretary, who is the official representative of India in the House of Commons, not long since made a speech in which almost every nation on the face of the earth was reviewed; he sat as it were upon a lofty pedestal of cosmopolitan criticism, and India, as the leading Journal remarked, was alone conspicuous for her absence. Although I have unduly trespassed on your patience, I will venture to ask you to permit me in conclusion to refer for a very few moments to a matter personal to myself. I would not, however, allude to it, did it not have some bearing upon a public question of no slight importance.

When a Parliament is in the fifth year of its existence, an early dissolution is, of course, a very probable contingency. Without presuming to make any prediction, it cannot be doubted that a general election may very likely take place before we again meet at such a gathering as this. Nothing could be more unfair than to take a constituency by surprise, and you ought to have the fullest opportunity of being able to select the candidates whom you would best like to represent you. Do not suppose that I am about to announce my retirement: I will simply repeat what I have stated before, that I will never leave you until you tell me to go. But if you again desire that I should be your candidate, I wish, without the slightest reserve, to make known to you under what conditions I shall be willing to stand. Few things in politics at the present time are to be looked upon with such grave apprehensions as the increasing costliness of Parliamentary contests. Unless some decided stand is made against the present system of electoral expenditure, the evil is certain to grow with the growing wealth of the country, and soon it will happen that all but the very rich will be excluded from the House of Commons. There is no reason why I should hesitate to speak to you with perfect openness. I am no more justified in spending £500 or £600 at each recurring election than I should be in living in an expensive house, in keeping a carriage and horses, or indulging in any other luxury which I cannot afford. I have therefore determined, both upon public and private considerations, to confine my

expenses at the next election within the narrowest possible limits. The necessary expenses the candidate is bound to pay by law. Besides these, it seems to me, that a candidate has done all that he can be fairly required to do, when he has advertised his address once in each of the local papers, and fully expressed his political opinions at a series of public meetings. All the usual electioneering paraphernalia, such as the printing of placards, the employment of paid canvassers, and the circulation of cards, involves an expenditure as useless as it is degrading. Nothing should I more regret than that the motives which have induced me thus to speak to you should be misunderstood. It may perhaps be thought that I am indirectly suggesting that my election expenses should not be borne by myself. I am, therefore, most anxious to state that even if subscriptions should be offered, I could not accept them. If election expenses are to be objected to on principle, little or no good is done if the system is allowed to continue in full vigour with the aid of other people's money. What I above all things desire to prove is that a Parliamentary career in this country is not an impossibility to one who is not rich. I promised that I would speak to you on this subject with complete frankness. After what you have heard, it is of course quite possible that you may prefer some one else to be your candidate. Should this be your decision, I shall accept it without a murmur, for whether I continue to be your representative or not, I can never cease gratefully to remember your kindness, and the

most pleasing recollection of my political life will be that the more I have endeavoured to maintain a course of independence, and the more I have striven to express to you my opinions without reserve, the more certain have I been to secure your confidence and retain your esteem.

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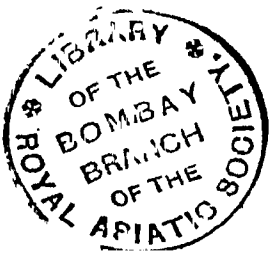
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